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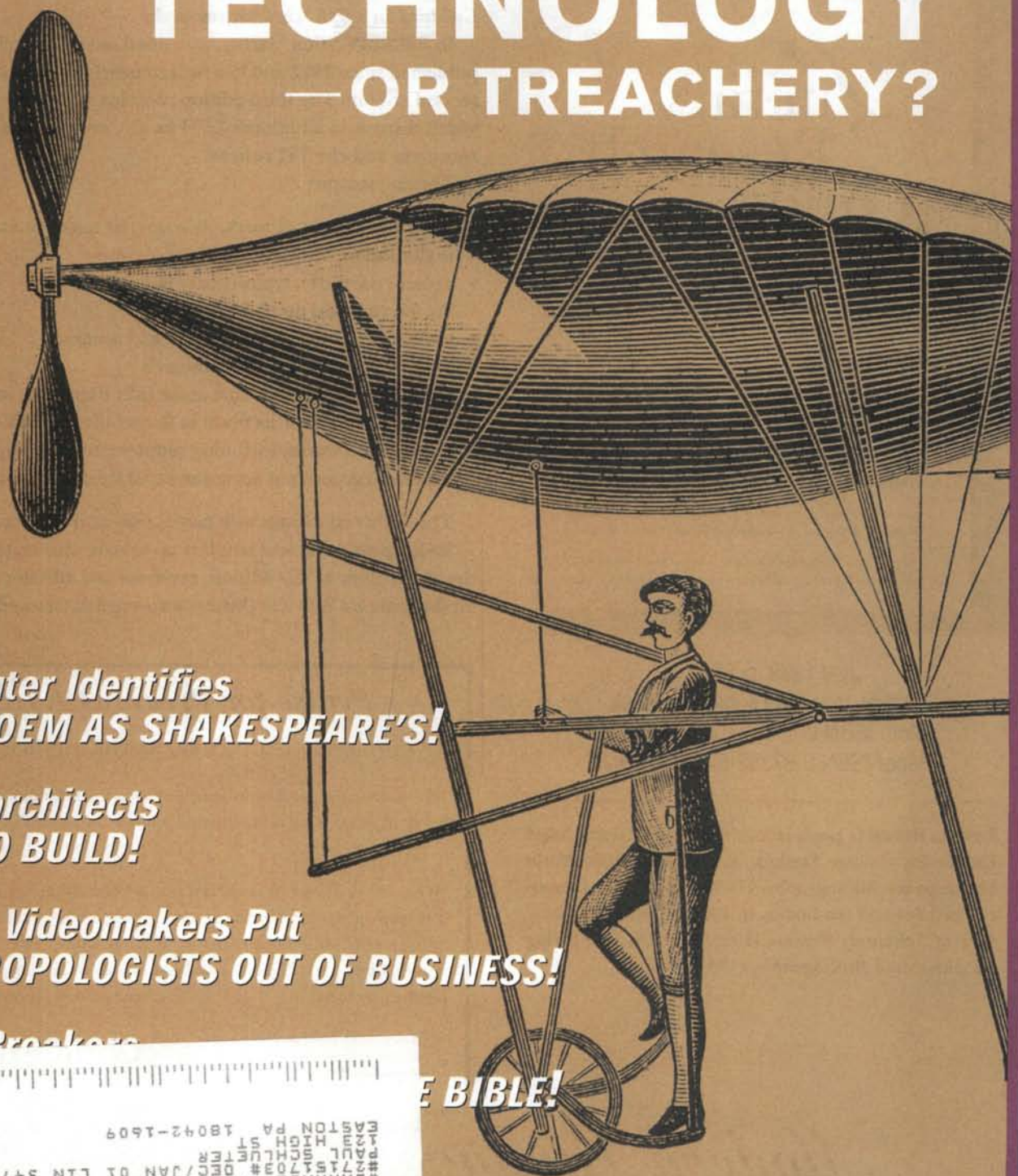

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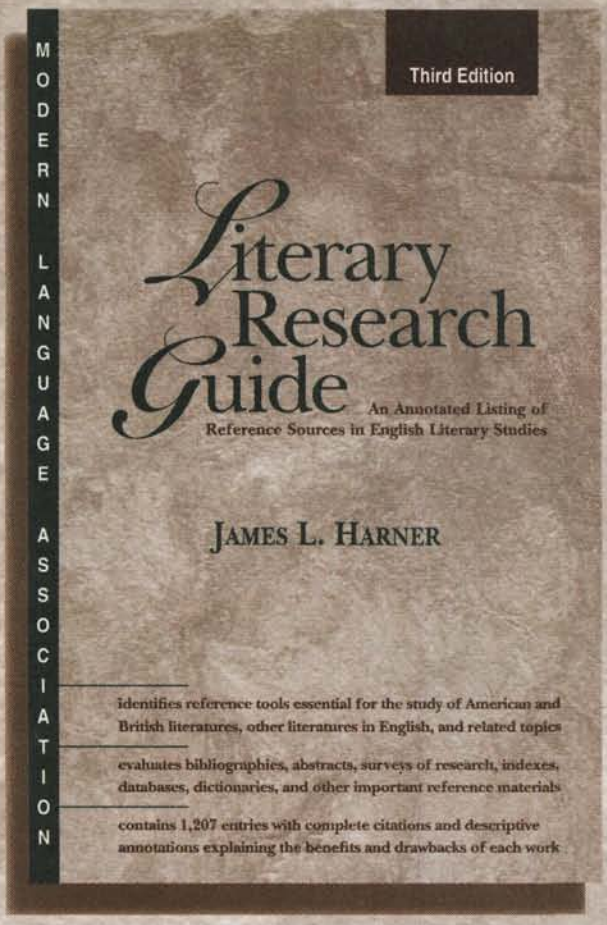
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JAMES L. HARNER is professor of English at Texas A&M University, College Station, and editor of the World Shakespeare Bibliography. He has published numerous articles and ten books, including the *MLA Directory of Scholarly Presses* (1996) and *On Compiling an Annotated Bibliography* (1991).

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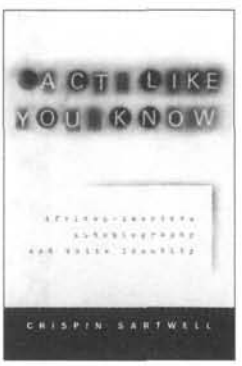

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In a conversation with Sir Thomas Robinson, Samuel Johnson reveals his opinion on the writing abilities of Frederick the Great, the King of Prussia: "...his prose is poor stuff. He writes just as you might suppose Voltaire's footboy to do, who has been his amanuensis." (***Life of Johnson, Vol. 1: The Life (1709 - 1765)***) - much to the delight of Voltaire himself.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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SILENCE, PLEASE

Daniel Zalewski's article on Paul Saenger's *Space Between Words* ["No Word Unspoken," April] cites my 1968 article but fails to detail the evidence it marshals for the normality and ubiquity of silent reading in the ancient world. The most important item consists of two scenes from fifth-century Athenian drama in which an actor is given a written document and proceeds to read it (silently) while ordering his companion to bring him one cup after another of wine. Both actors then reveal the contents of the document. All this happens on stage before an audience of some twelve thousand spectators. Nothing could more clearly demonstrate the normality—one could even say the banality—of silent reading in the Athens of the fifth century B.C. Saenger is simply wrong in his dismissal of silent reading in the ancient world.

The truth is that he exaggerates the difficulty of learning to read uninterrupted script. I am not one of the brain-damaged Japanese he refers to in his book, but, like many of my fellow classicists who have studied ancient papyri, both in the original and in photographs, I found the adjustment to uninterrupted script quick and easy. It must have been easier still for the ancients, who were trained to read and write it from their earliest years.

BERNARD KNOX
DIRECTOR EMERITUS
CENTER FOR HELLENIC STUDIES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

CIVIL WARS

Eyal Press's article "The Archive Eaters" [April] was generally informative and fair, but like other writers (e.g., Tony Judt in *The New York Review of Books*) he chose to accept others' caricatures of my work on the Korean War, rather than read the work or speak with me directly. In particular, he accepts Kathryn Weathersby's attempt to stigmatize my work as revisionist and cites her opinion that the question of who started the Korean War has now been resolved. Likewise, John Lewis Gaddis is allowed to caricature my arguments about why Washington planners like Dean Acheson welcomed this war in June 1950.

This debate has nothing to do with scholarship or formerly secret documentation. On the part of Gaddis and Weathersby it is purely political—an attempt to refight the Cold War a decade after it ended which shows not the slightest concern for the suffering of the Korean people, who have now lived with their interminable war for more than half a century. My two-volume *Origins of the Korean War,* published by Princeton University Press in 1981 and 1990, established for the first time a reliable and verifiable record of how the war originated, and was in no sense "revisionist" because when I began writing there was little to revise except the official stories from Washington and Seoul, or Moscow and Pyongyang. Furthermore, from the preface of the first volume to the concluding chapter of the second, my argument was that civil wars do not "start," they come. (No one cares anymore that the South fired first on Fort Sumter, etc.) I pointedly refused to involve myself in American polemics about "who started the Korean War," but sought instead to illuminate their political and ideological presuppositions.

If there was a "start" to the Korean civil war, the time would not be June 1950 but August 1945, when American planners thoughtlessly divided a nation with an ancient unity and integrity. In the five years leading up to June 1950, at least 100,000 Koreans died in internecine political conflicts. Indeed, I just returned from a conference in Tokyo that commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of a rebellion that began on Cheju Island in 1948, leading to the deaths of at least thirty thousand islanders at the hands of ruthless suppres-

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Playing Indian
Philip J. Deloria

"Whether the focus is on the Boston colonists whooping it up, or on new age, counterculture types setting up tepees in back-to-nature settings, Deloria **makes a convincing case** for ways in which Americans have used Indian symbols and items for their own purposes and identities."
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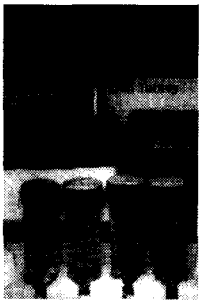
Jon Turney



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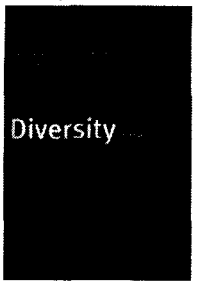

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Field *Notes*

POSTING FOR PROFIT

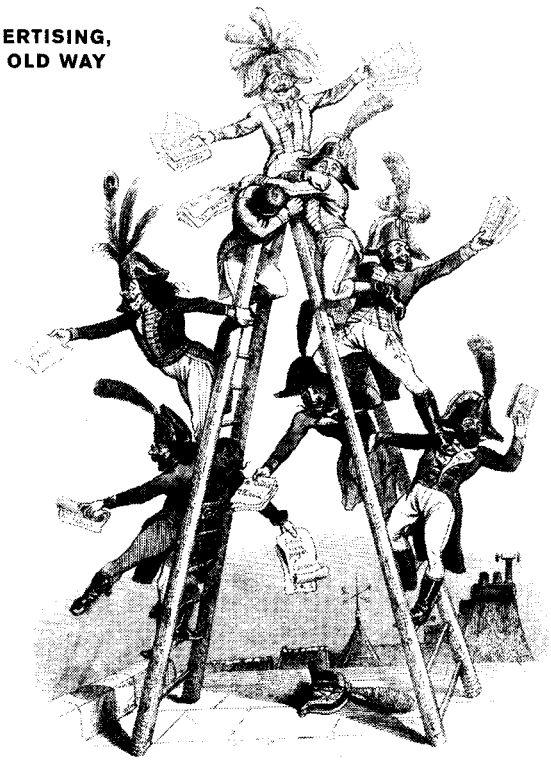
COMING SOON TO A DISCUSSION list near you: advertising by e-mail. At least if the Sift people have their way. One of dozens of Stanford University spin-offs, the Silicon Valley firm is trying to make e-mail advertising legitimate. Sift matches advertisers like *Wired* magazine and Dell computers with the most desirable on-line discussion lists—the digital answer to direct mail.

After attracting an advertiser to a list, Sift president Jeff Wilkins asks the list's moderator for permission to effectively rent the names of subscribers for a onetime fee—usually $50 for every one thousand subscribers. Then, he delivers the text-only ads to the e-mail boxes of each subscriber, often with an explanation from the list moderator.

So far, more than one thousand lists have signed up with Sift for ads. Many of these discussion forums are concerned with technological subjects such as the virtues of IBM mainframes. But Wilkins says that other kinds of discussion lists are starting to follow suit. Will subscribers to Chaucer-L be hearing about discount fares to Canterbury any time soon?

Since as many as a third of existing lists are run on university software, it may be only a matter of time before e-mail advertising becomes a regular source of university revenue. After all, in the increasingly entrepreneurial world of academe, the ad money that Sift offers can go to a department, a lab—even into the list owner's pocket. "Academic institutions have historically been shielded from the economic realities of the world," says Wilkins. "That may be ending. I know of a lot of places that are under pressure to find ways to underwrite what they're doing."

ADVERTISING, THE OLD WAY



Of course, the academic setting presents considerable challenges for e-mail advertising, ranging from the logistical to the philosophical and legal. But the biggest challenge may be finding advertising-friendly academic lists. "Advertisers don't want to be in a market where people are upset about advertising, and with academics there would always be people who would be upset," says Philip Agre, an associate professor of communications at UC-San Diego, a popular writer on cyberspace issues, and a list publisher himself.

Ad-resistant professors might be especially upset about Sift's capacity to monitor their on-line debates. Besides maintaining a public directory of some 159,000 discussion lists (available at www.reference.com), Sift stores the "archives" of more than fifteen thousand lists at no cost to the owners. Then, using search tools which Sift licenses from Stanford, the company regularly mines those archived lists for mentions of particular products or services. The results of these data forays can be forwarded to advertisers on a daily basis.

Wilkins, a Stanford Ph.D. in electrical engineering, concedes that some e-mailers may wish to keep their conversations hidden from marketers. Joining the archive is at the option of the list owner, he says, and all subscribers are informed of an electronic command that will keep their postings out of the archive.

Slowly waking up to the possibilities and liabilities of Internet commerce, most universities are cautiously revising existing policies. At the University of Notre Dame, for example, that means no advertising. "Notre Dame is very protective of its image," says Larry Rapagnani, assistant provost for information technologies at the school. "We don't have advertising on campus. We don't have advertising on our Web site. To have advertising on a list.... we probably wouldn't do that."

Yet at many schools, the rules aren't entirely clear—particularly if the proceeds go to the university. Says M. Stuart Lynn, associate vice president for information resources and communications at the University of California system, "The electronic world is raising so many new questions that we don't always have the time to get the answers in

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advance. Selling on-line advertising space is not within our current framework of possibility, but I don't want to rule it out. After all, we publish print magazines in which people buy advertising space."

At the University of Alabama, systems programmer Darren Evans-Young got around university red tape with a simple decision: He chose not to charge a rental fee for ads posted on his IBM mainframe list. When Sift approached him, he was initially skeptical about running ads. But after polling his membership, he discovered that "most of them feel short advertisements are reasonable, as long as they're not too frequent." There's one more restriction. "If the ad does not pertain directly to IBM mainframes, I will not allow it," says Evans-Young. "That would just get the readership mad at me. I don't want twelve hundred subscribers sending me personal e-mail."

> Will universities soon be selling access to on-line discussion lists?

Even as the rules for e-mail advertising sort themselves out, academic publishers are bypassing middlemen like Sift and attempting to reach discussion-list subscribers directly. The MIT Press began experimenting with the medium about three years ago, according to promotion manager Gita Manaktala. "It tends to be useful in research areas that are new or not fully formed so that you can't advertise in a professional journal or at a meeting," she says. University press notices are one kind of ad that strikes list owners as benign. "We want people to know when books are published," says Seth Wigderson of the on-line humanities and social sciences network H-Net. But, he says, he cuts out "classic advertising materials, testimonials, blurbs, and so forth."

MIT Press publicists now post e-promotions by the hundreds. And most lists accept them without charging a fee, though that may change. For now, at least, the press prefers not to call what it does advertising. "It's written as an announcement," explains a publicity assistant. "It's more matter-of-fact in tone. People on listservs are just not attracted to something that sounds really sales-y."

PAMELA BURDMAN

BUBBLE TALK

WHEN THE PALACE FIRST appeared on-line in late 1995, it revolutionized the Internet chat session. Previously, real-time Internet discussions had been exclusively text based. But Palace chat rooms were elaborately decorated environments in which each user appeared as a distinct graphical "avatar" on screen—a baby picture, Betty Boop, or anything in between. Moreover, the new medium was able to simulate dazzling and exotic locations—from Sweden to the Southwest—as well as Hollywood film settings. There is even a Scuba palace, situated entirely underwater.

The Palace's creators initially geared their software toward the traditional patrons of real-time chat: gossiping teenagers, science-fiction buffs, and the like. But as the Department of Defense scientists who dreamed up the Internet learned long ago, once a technology exists, there's no telling how hackers will usurp it for their own twisted ends. It was only a matter of time before Palace software fell into the hands of those notorious renegades of on-line culture: college professors. Bryan Kerr, a vice president at The Palace Inc. in Beaverton, Oregon, says the company's software has proved popular at hundreds of schools around the country. But who would have guessed that at Georgia Tech, Syracuse, and Kent State, professors have begun to use Palace chat rooms as integral parts of their teaching strategies?

Academic instruction was the last thing the company's designers had in mind when they came up with the idea for the Palace. The software's strength lies in its visual sophistication: Palace rooms are lavish physical spaces within which users can manipulate graphic icons. Users can redesign their avatars as they see fit; they can represent themselves as Farrah Fawcett, Felix the Cat, some creative combination of these characters, or any other image that may be scanned into or drawn on the computer.

Conversation, however, is more limited: A user's post must fit into a small cartoon-style speech bubble floating next to his or her avatar. Hence, Palace conversations, perhaps even more than real-time Internet chat, tend to be short and choppy. And the software lacks the ability to separate subjects into distinct threads—one of the best techniques for keeping on-line discussions focused.

Given these limitations, why would academics want to turn the Palace into a classroom? One of the most ambitious programs, Georgia Tech's

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TechLINC, provides some clues. TechLINC's palace is used in one quarter of the school's freshman composition courses. Students are required to meet on-line in palace rooms to discuss the week's readings and to formulate group papers. Initially, these on-line meetings are held in computer-equipped classrooms to familiarize students with the software; but over the course of the semester, students begin signing in from their dorm rooms. Meanwhile, professors use their palace rooms to hold virtual office hours.

In this context, the Palace's ability to create the illusion of a shared physical space may be a great advantage. Georgia Tech professor Terry Harpold believes that the Palace's comfortable environment can be a powerful tool for overcoming social barriers. And Professor Richard Grusin, chair of Georgia Tech's School of Literature, Communication, and Culture, says TechLINC has increased collegiality between professors and students—"for better and for worse." He explains: "Students are much quicker to challenge their grades and to communicate things you really didn't want to know."

Such as? "Sometimes I've left the door to my virtual office 'unlocked,' and when I come back I find students have dumped a pile of beer-bottle icons in there," says Harpold. And Grusin says hacker students have occasionally managed to grant themselves "wizard" status—enabling them to "kill" other users' avatars. "But it's not too serious," he says. "No one has ever died in any way that's affected their grade."

In any case, such unruliness is apparently quite rare. "If anything," reflects Daryl Ogden, another Georgia Tech instructor, "in my darker moments I think the Palace enables a kind of Foucauldian control over students, because they never know when the instructor's gaze might be cast over their computer terminal."

Can a class discussion be conducted via cartoon-style speech bubbles?

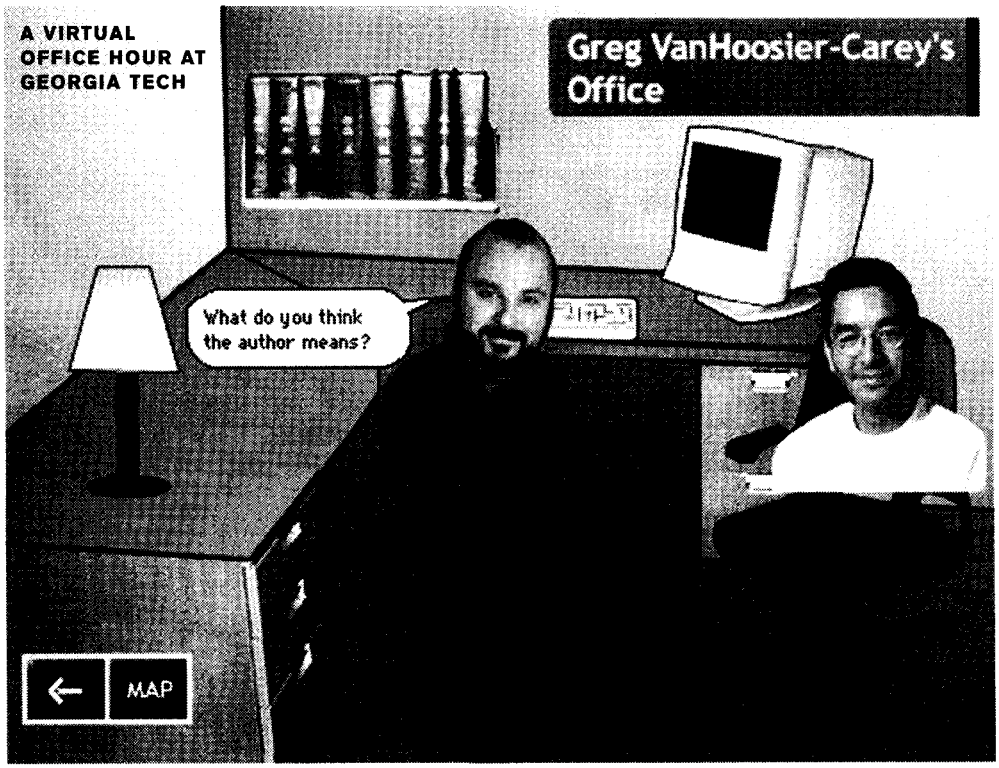
To judge from sample discussions in several academic palaces, the software's small text bubbles have not proved an insurmountable barrier to seriousness. Georgia Tech students assigned to discuss Roland Barthes are soon trading short bursts of jargon: "That was the connoted image, how about the denoted one?" And at Syracuse, professors and graduate students in the international relations program used the Palace for a detailed discussion of peacekeeping operations with their counterparts at Sweden's Uppsala University.

Nevertheless, there are many academic applications for which the standard Palace software is ill suited. "You can't deliver a lecture in a Palace balloon," says Adam Rubin, a former Syracuse undergrad. Last year, Rubin designed an award-winning modification of the Palace called AskERIC, which addresses some of the software's shortcomings. AskERIC is modeled on a classroom metaphor: Students are limited to the Palace's standard text balloons, but the professor can use a large central screen space for more detailed presentations. In this palace, not everyone is equal.

It's not surprising that the first academic programs to use the Palace have tended to be those with a curricular interest in technology. In recent years, the English department at Georgia Tech has made a concerted effort to focus on the intersection of culture and technology. This strategy has paid off: Students can now major in English and even get a master's degree in the subject. And the Palace fits right into this new departmental self-image.

But what about using the Palace in departments with more conventional curricula? "I'm not sure these technologies would be as valuable in a more traditional humanities department," says Harpold. "The problems of the Palace"—dialogue bubbles, for example—"would be seen as failures, not as interesting subjects of discussion in themselves. For instance, for a couple of days, our server went down. When it came back up, we talked about the implications for culture of being involved in a communication that can be broken by technology. If you're talking about British Romantic poetry and the server goes down, you'd probably just say, oh well, we can't talk about British Romantic poetry today, the server's down."

MATT STEINGLASS



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BEASTS OF BURDEN

THE SPRING 1998 NEWSLETTER of the Modern Language Association featured the usual gamut of proposed sessions for its annual convention, to be held in San Francisco next December. The following call for papers appeared, sandwiched between more traditional panels asking for essays on Henry James and William Faulkner:

> **The Personal as Professional**: The ways in which aspects of our personal lives (e.g., child-bearing, breast-feeding, rape, AIDS, mental illness, pets) become part of our research projects. 8-page papers or abstracts and vitae by 6 Mar.

Inspired, I responded with an abstract titled "Disciplining the Pet: Heats, Treats, and the Art of Heeling."

My paper, I declared, would examine the pet's hitherto unrecognized contribution to academic scholarship. Numerous studies abound in which the pet as generative agent is tacitly acknowledged; yet no full-length, single-author intervention exists that explicitly addresses the issues surrounding the pet's influence on the scholar, scholarship, or the profession. In *Fighting Forces, Writing Women* (Routledge, 1994), her study of identity and ideology, Nottingham Trent University lecturer Sharon Ouditt mysteriously acknowledges one Zuli as "my smallest, but most vital support-system" during the writing process. And in his 1993 book, *The Victorian Period* (Longman), University of Aberdeen professor Robin Gilmour also recognizes the influence of a "little friend." Unlike Ouditt, he further identifies his source of inspiration as a dog—though he is also inscrutably circumspect on the subject, saying only "I owe something to my Jack Russell Terrier, Tiffin."

Finally, in University of Georgia professor Elizabeth Kraft's *Character and Consciousness in Eighteenth-Century Comic Fiction* (Georgia, 1992), the full truth comes out: "Without those long rides in the mountains of northern Georgia with our Old English

CAREN ALPERT

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sheep dogs...this book could not have been written."

Dedications to pets are not unheard of. In her *History of the Modern Fact,* due out this October from Chicago, New York University professor Mary Poovey turns her dedication page into an eloquent memorial to "Sufi, 1980–1997." "Readers who do not know me may wonder why I have dedicated such a challenging book to a dog," she admits in her acknowledgments. But without Sufi, she explains, "my work would have had less focus.... my life would have had less joy." Yet it is up to University of Western Ontario professor Tilottama Rajan in *The Supplement of Reading: Figures of Understanding in Romantic Theory and Practice* (Cornell,1990) to offer a detailed account of what the author describes as "my most unusual debt" to the pet—or at least the creatures in the backyard. She credits four very special squirrels:

> To Tangerina, Chloe, and most of all to Twinkle and her daughter Periwinkle. They have helped me to relearn the language of romanticism, which had once seemed to me an object of critique only, and to understand the deeply hermeneutic nature of the relationship to the other. For they have wanted to communicate despite the absence of a spoken language, and if I have sought the illusory immediacy of speech, their choice of gesture and mime has told me that they know understanding to be by signs only. Sharing some of their life with me, they have not shared their death. But they have allowed their death to be signified, by a child or a sister, so that the silence and solitude of their absence would not be vacancy.

At this juncture, studies of the impact of the pet on research may not carry the same weight as work on childbearing, breastfeeding, rape, AIDS, or mental illness, but

"Readers who do not know me may wonder why I have dedicated such a challenging book to a dog," writes Mary Poovey.

it is the conviction of this author that soon they will. Pets have often figured prominently in literary constructions of these "more serious" issues.

For example, the pet intersects the issue of sexual violence in William Bradford's *History Of Plimmoth Plantation* (1630–1651):

> There was a youth whose name was Thomas Granger... this year detected of buggery, and indicted for the same, with a mare, a cow, two goats, five sheep, two calves and a turkey.... He was first discovered by one who accidently saw his lewd practice toward the mare.... And whereas some of the sheep could not so well be known by his description of them, others with them were brought before him and he declared which were [the objects of his affections] and which were not.... A very sad spectacle it was. For first the mare and then the cow and the rest of the lesser cattle were killed before his face, according to the law, Leviticus xx.15; and then he himself was executed.

Although AIDS is not thought to be communicable between species (apart from the "green monkey" theory regarding its genesis), mad cow disease is.

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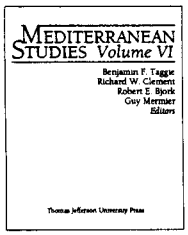

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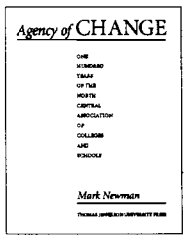

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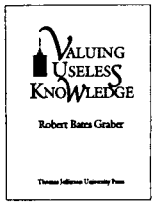

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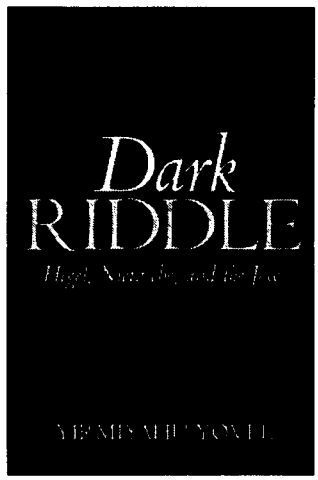
Dark Riddle
Hegel, Nietzsche, and the Jews
YIRMIYAHU YOVEL



"Yirmiyahu Yovel's *Dark Riddle* is a well-crafted and much-needed contribution to three scholarly literatures: on Hegel, on Nietzsche, and on the situation and the perception of the Jewish people in nineteenth-century Europe. Yovel shows precisely how Judaism and the Jews were thematized in the work of two influential philosophers. His deepgoing study of Nietzsche, in particular, is a surprise, setting a much misunderstood record straight. This book is engaging and fascinating reading for anyone who cares about the interplay of philosophical ideas with the events of modern history."
—Stephen Crites, Wesleyan University

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(Witness the wholesale slaughtering of cows—including pet cows—in England last year.) As for mental illness and the pet, the connection has explicitly and poignantly been made in Daniel Keyes's *Flowers for Algernon*. In the future, pet studies will open further the critical discussion of these already hot issues and in doing so help to heal the all-too-real wounds that such discussions address. Pets can show us compassion and the value of compassion in our research, and perhaps in the process teach our profession to be more humane.

My own project begins in the autobiographical, building on my relationship with an influential other that shared my home: Charlotte. While doing my doctoral work, I used to lie on a couch studying the intricate weavings of this tiny

CAREN ALPERT

but energetic spider of the common house variety. Charlotte's webs were always constructed in a similar manner: Once the foundations were decided on, she would tie some major threads together, and then start circling, round and round and round, until the web was so complicated that it was hard to tell if there was any structure to it at all.

What have pets contributed to academic scholarship?

I realize now that this was exactly how I was working on my dissertation. Charlotte performed, in graphic representation, my own working strategies. And not only did this spider influence my scholarly methods, but I think she was the deciding factor in my area of specialization—early American literature, specifically the work of Jonathan Edwards. (I am currently writing an essay on Edward Taylor's "Upon a Spider Catching a Fly," which I will finish by the time of the conference, should there be an anthology in the works.)

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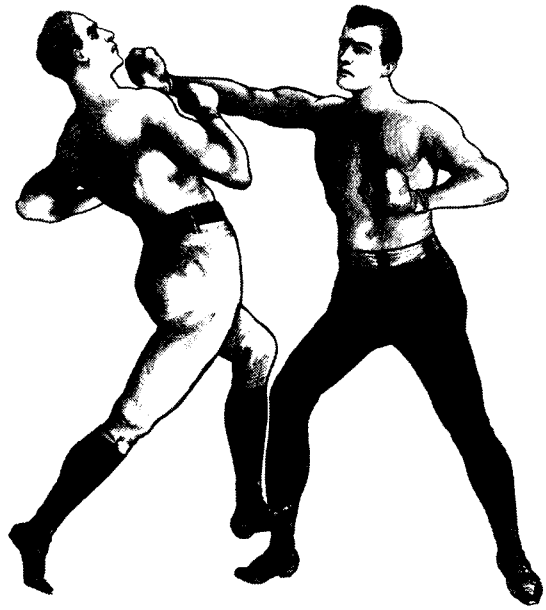
THE BARRO PLOT



IN APRIL, *THE NEW YORK TIMES* reported that Harvard economist Robert Barro was about to sign an unimaginably lucrative deal with Columbia University. In the almost-done deal, Columbia had secured Barro a $300,000 salary, his wife a job, and for the whole family, a stunning Riverside Drive apartment—this last despite a happily ensconced, long-term tenant.

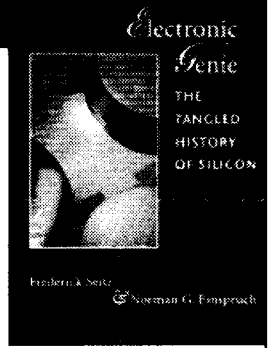
Subsequently, however, it emerged that Barro had changed his mind and decided to stay in Cambridge. What drives a man—an economist, no less—to turn down such treasures? Loyalty to Harvard? Fear of Manhattan? Sheer perversity?

We do know this much: Last winter, when Barro and Columbia were openly flirting, Harvard Dean Jeremy Knowles masterminded the Barro plot. On a piece of his personal stationery, Knowles reasoned with the restless professor in the economist's preferred mode: the line graph. The Barro plot exhibits an upwardly mobile line that diverges into two trajectories. One path continues in its mighty ascent towards a heavenly "H" and ecstatic smiley face. The other plummets and peters out near a sad face and sinister "C." Just what exactly was Knowles plotting? How did he label his graph's vertical axis? Income? Happiness? Housing square footage? Knowles transcended such earthly delights and charted nothing less than "cosmic distinction."

Was it this graph that made all the difference?

BRETT SIMON

A spark of genius



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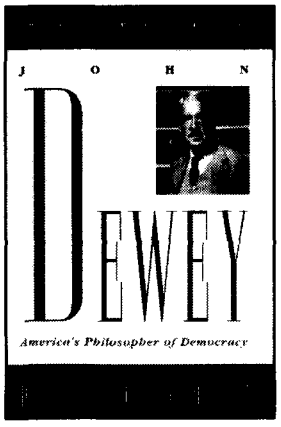

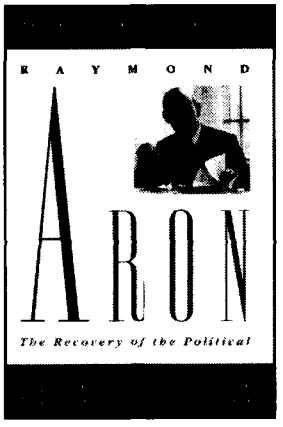

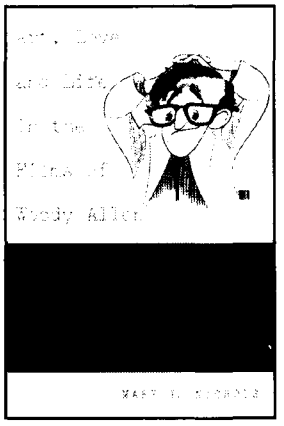

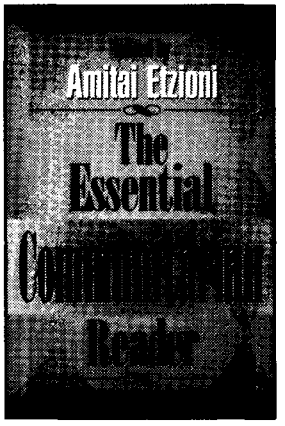

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Patricia Aufderheide, professor of communications at American University and author of *Communications Policy and the Public Interest: The Telecommunications Act of 1996* (Guilford, forthcoming).

"In an area where information has a half-life of weeks, we're always in search of basic facts—only to discover that we don't know what they mean. No wonder the Internet has been prey to pundits who yo-yo us between the ecstatic and the curmudgeonly. Now there's a Web site for humanistic technocritics: **www.technorealism.org.** Launched with its own manifesto last spring, the site instantly engendered the highest form of cyberflattery—parody, with sites devoted to technoblatherism, technofeelism, and pubertyrealism. Among technorealism's principles: 'Information is not knowledge.' This concept also informs ***Data Smog*** (HarperEdge, 1997), by one of the manifesto's authors, **David Shenk**. Shenk argues that nonstop information, flowing across wide-open communications networks, is great for marketers and con artists but not for democracy or peace of mind. It doesn't allow for moderate discussion—unlike the technorealism site, where one can find informed conversation about living well as we informationally age."

....

Steven Johnson, editor of the on-line journal *Feed* and author of *Interface Culture: How New Technology Transforms the Way We Create and Communicate* (HarperCollins, 1997).

"The ambitious subtitle of **Andrew Leonard**'s ***Bots: The Origin of a New Species*** (Wired Books, 1997) suggests yet another mind-altered manifesto about the new organisms of cyberspace, heavy on the epic pronouncements and light on actual evidence. But the book turns out to be something else altogether: a series of illuminating case studies in one of computing's weirdest and most innovative fields. A "Bot" is Net slang for an autonomous software program that emulates human behavior in its dealings with flesh-and-blood users. Surveying an extraordinarily diverse field with a taxonomist's eye, Leonard lays out a series of portraits of the bot family tree: software characters that inhabit on-line communities; intelligent agents that manage information for people; cancelbots that delete junk e-mail en masse; and spiders that crawl across the Web compiling data for the mighty search engines. Leonard has some tantalizing words to say about the technodialectic driving bot evolution, but you're left wanting a little more analysis. Leonard is not yet the Darwin of the digital ecosystem, but the refreshing thing about his book is that he's not trying to be."

....

Mark Dery, a cultural critic and author of *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century* (Grove/Atlantic, 1996).

"*Zeros + Ones: Digital Women and the New Technoculture* (Doubleday, 1997), by **Sadie Plant**, is a would-be cyberfeminist manifesto. In this fascinating (if doggedly wrongheaded) meditation on gender politics in the digital age, Plant argues that men are born command-and-control freaks, genetically out of step with the new, out-of-control cyberculture. Resurrecting the shopworn argument that women's essential nature makes them superior to men, Plant embraces the Net as an exemplar of 'feminine' values such as non-linear reasoning. As Plant tells it, the Internet was once a self-assembled network that deliberately subverted patriarchy—a revelation that would come as a thunderbolt to the Internet's military-industrial creators. Read as postmodern science fiction, however, *Zeros + Ones* is highly entertaining, a shotgun wedding of Gilles Deleuze and Joanna Russ. But Gutenbergian holdouts would be well advised to arm themselves with a weed whacker before venturing into this Garden of Forking Paths."

....

Paulina Borsook, a San Francisco–based writer and author of *Cyberselfish: How the Digital Elite Is Undermining Our Society, Culture, and Values* (Broadway Books, forthcoming).

"There are few so universally revered as both technologist and humanist as **Peter Neumann**, chief scientist at the Stanford Research Institute. His ***Computer-Related Risks*** (Addison-Wesley, 1995) is a compendium of yarns about computer snafus ranging from the comic to the tragic and touching on reliability, safety, security, and privacy. Neumann's book is both a technical publication and a meta-lesson on how we—and the technologies we create—are fallible. Such chastening is in short supply on the Web. In a different vein, the site **www.suck.com** pioneered the pomo, self-deprecating, self-referential voice that's now everywhere on-line. Now, a collection of the best of ***Suck: Worst-Case Scenarios in Media, Culture, Advertising, and the Internet*** (Wired Books, 1997), edited by **Joey Anuff** and **Ana Marie Cox**, shows why there ain't nothing like the real thing."

....

Jay David Bolter, professor of literature, communication, and culture at Georgia Tech and author, with Richard Grusin, of *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (MIT, forthcoming).

"The World Wide Web, culturally and economically the most important service on the Internet, is a global hypertext. To understand the Web, therefore, we need to understand the rhetorical and theoretical nature of hypertext and hypermedia. An indispensable book for that purpose is **George P. Landow**'s *Hypertext 2.0: The Convergence of Contempo-*

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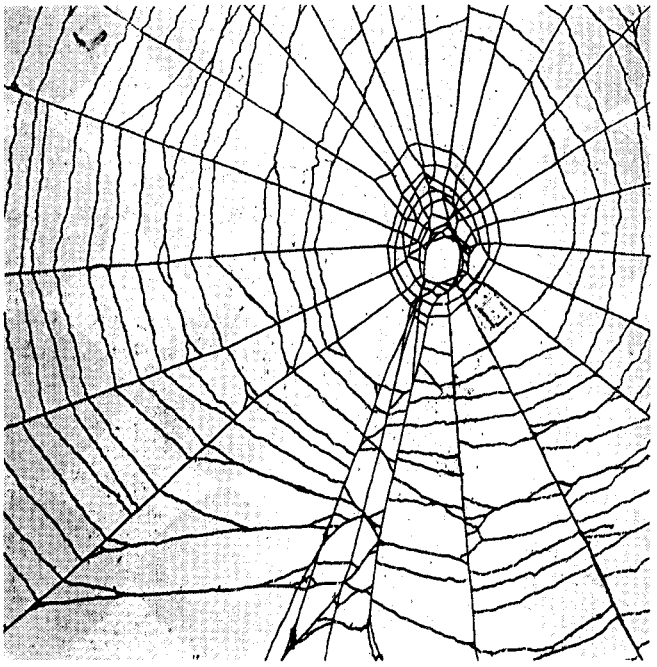

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rary Critical Theory and Technology (Johns Hopkins, 1997). In this thorough revision of the 1992 edition of *Hypertext*, Landow argues that hypertext reconfigures author, text, narrative, and the very idea of writing in ways that embody the insights of thirty years of poststructuralist literary theory. It is a bold thesis that many have questioned, but it needs to be considered, because hypertext will surely continue to be a defining element in our media landscape."

....

Robert McChesney, professor of journalism and mass communication at the University of Wisconsin at Madison and author of *Media in Crisis, Democracy in Retreat: Communication, Politics, History, and Scholarship in Dubious Times* (Illinois, forthcoming).

"Most critical work on the Internet has been fairly ahistorical and unsophisticated. It has often failed to integrate the Internet into the broader media and communication systems, and all of them into the broader political economy. Nicholas Negroponte, for instance, views technology as autonomous and benevolent, and capitalism as essentially democratic. In *Digital Capitalism* (MIT, forthcoming), however, **Dan Schiller** provides a compelling and sobering view of the democratic potential of the Internet. Drawing on trade and business publications and government reports, Schiller demonstrates how the Internet, because it has been closely linked with capitalism, the communication requirements of large corporations, and neoliberal regulatory policies, exacerbates social inequality. He also suggests the need for strong regulation of Internet service providers to promote public access and a public-service component of the Web."

....

Elizabeth Reba Weise, a San Francisco–based technology writer for *USA Today* and co-editor of *Wired Women: Gender and New Realities in Cyberspace* (Seal, 1996).

"The growing hunger of the publishing industry for news rather than history and the relentless media hype about the Internet have thus far precluded the publication of a clear-eyed analysis of the Internet. But **Claude S. Fischer**'s *America Calling: A Social History of the Telephone to 1940* (California, 1992) provides a blueprint for what such a volume might include—as well as a healthy reminder that hype about a new communications technology is hardly novel. Fischer offers a fascinating social history of the telephone, informed by studies comparing the distribution of the telephone and automobile, statistics on the cost of a telephone in different eras, and an intriguing look at censuses and old telephone directories to determine who had phones when. The book is enlivened by interviews with California residents who remember the introduction of telephones in the century's early decades."

....

Margaret Morse, associate professor of film and electronic media at the University of California at Santa Cruz and author of *Virtualities: Television, Media Art, and Cyberculture* (Indiana, 1998).

"**Steven Johnson**'s *Interface Culture: How New Technology Transforms the Way We Create and Communicate* (HarperCollins, 1997) is an account of revolutionary advances and heroic figures in the history of the screen interface. In a style honed by semiotic theory but lacking in jargon, Johnson explains how the visual metaphors that organize information space are evolving into a genuine art form. In *Close to the Machine: Technophilia and Its Discontents* (City Lights, 1997), **Ellen Ullman** offers a more somber treatment of the messages latent in the interface medium. Lyrically written anecdotes about algorithmic lovemaking with a 'cypherpunk' and the agony of designing software resonate with the dark cultural implications of the virtual life. For Ullman, a software engineer, second-wave feminist, and old communist, the word 'revolution' rings hollow from inside the crumbling software that threatens to destroy the banking system."

....

Robert Pool, a freelance science and technology writer and author of *Beyond Engineering: How Society Shapes Technology* (Oxford, 1997).

"In *Where Wizards Stay Up Late: The Origins of the Internet* (Touchstone, 1998), **Katie Hafner** and **Matthew Lyon** describe how a group of visionary computer scientists funded by an equally visionary Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) set out in the late 1960s to link a number of powerful computers around the country. They succeeded, and their ARPANET was the prototype of today's Internet. But as Hafner and Lyon demonstrate, the Internet's development was haphazard. It grew as it did because the developers of the network were also its original users, so they pushed the system in the directions that were most useful to them—for example, by creating ways to send private e-mail and to hold open electronic forums. In general, the features that make today's Internet most valuable to people are not those originally envisioned by the agencies funding the research. Instead they are the collective product of individual users satisfying their joint curiosity and desires."

JOHN PALATTELLA

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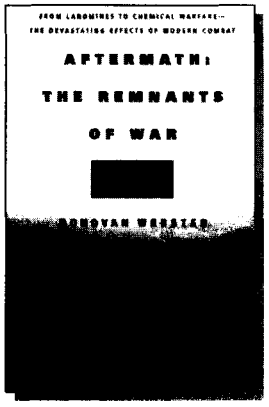
New in paperback from Vintage Books



Aftermath: The Remnants of War

From Landmines to Chemical Warfare—the Devastating Effects of Modern Combat

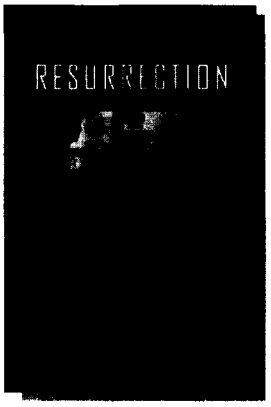
by Donovan Webster

Winner of the Lionel Gelber Prize

"Destined to rank with John Hersey's *Hiroshima* as a testament of man's inhumanity to man."
—*Chicago Tribune*

Webster provides a horrifying picture of the ways in which twentieth-century battlefields continue to maim and kill innocent victims long after the battles are over. From the search for World War I landmines in France, to the devastatingly-high number of deformed infant victims of Agent Orange in Vietnam, to engineers in Kuwait who must scour every inch of their country searching for the remainder of seven million landmines planted during the Gulf War, *Aftermath* reveals how the lethal remnants of past battles remain tragically potent in the present.

$14.00 288 pages



Resurrection

The Struggle for a New Russia

With a new Afterword

by David Remnick

"This is what happens when a good writer unleashes eye and ear on a story that moves with the speed of light. *Resurrection* has the feel of describing vast, historical change even as it happens."
—*Chicago Tribune*

With the same powers of narration, description, and analysis he brought to his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Lenin's Tomb,* Remnick chronicles the new Russia that is emerging from the remains of the Soviet Union. Composed out of dozens of finely realized individual portraits—from Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and Yegor Gaidar, to Zhirinovsky, Vladimir Gusinsky, and Solzhenitsyn—set against a backdrop dominated by the war in Chechnya, *Resurrection* offers a definitive account of the struggle to build a new Russia.

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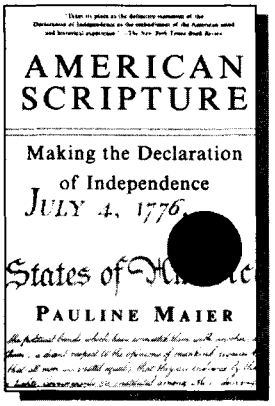

American Scripture

Making the Declaration of Independence

by Pauline Maier

National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist

"Takes its place as the definitive statement of the Declaration of Independence as the embodiment of the American Mind and historical experience"
—*New York Times Book Review*

In a breathtaking historical work that revolutionizes our understanding of the Declaration of Independence, Maier makes clear how the document became an expression of the American mind. She sheds light on the origins of the myth of Jefferson's single authorship and on how Lincoln ensured the Declaration's persistence as a living force in our society. Finally, she shows how by the very act of venerating it, we may actually be betraying the Declaration's purpose.

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Inside*Publishing*

LOVE IN THE RUINS

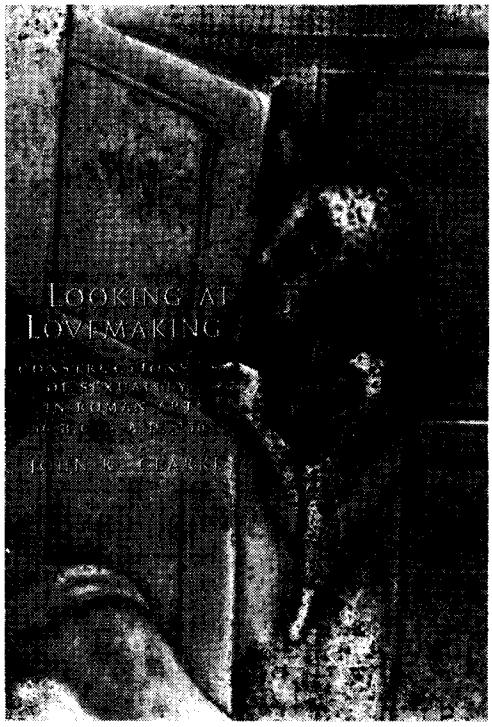
"CAPTIVE GREECE," THE ROMAN POET HORACE once wrote, referring rather enviously to the country Rome had made into a mere province, "took her savage victor captive, and brought the arts into rustic Latium." Augustus's favorite poet, like other ancient Romans, clearly struggled with a serious case of culture envy. The same, alas, might be said of Latin scholars.

For several decades now, Hellenists have been bringing to the study of ancient Greek civilization insights gleaned from cultural studies, feminist theory, and, especially, the structuralism-inspired "French school" led by Jean-Pierre Vernant at the Collège de France. The results—ideology-driven and jargon-filled excesses aside—have spectacularly enriched our understanding of everything from Aeschylus to drinking cups.

Until lately, however, Roman studies has by and large refused to wake up and smell the café crème. The almost simultaneous appearance this spring of John R. Clarke's *Looking at Lovemaking: Constructions of Sexuality in Roman Art, 100 B.C.–A.D. 250* (California)—which fuses an old fashioned art-historical meticulousness with an up-to-the-minute sensitivity to nuances of sex, class, and commerce—and of *Roman Sexualities* (Princeton)—a grab bag of theory-inflected but philologically well-grounded essays—suggests that, not for the first time, the Romans are finally catching up to the Greeks.

Looking at Lovemaking is by far the more reader friendly of the two volumes. Beautifully designed and carrying a blurb from the gay novelist Edmund White, the book seems intended for coffee tables in Westchester as well as bookshelves in Widener Library. And why not? The rich color plates, accompanied by helpful architectural drawings and crisp black-and-white photographs, are great to look at, featuring not only the well-known erotic frescoes from Pompeii but everything from crude provincial terra-cottas to objects of high artistry like the silver Warren Cup, a breathtaking Augustan relic of elite provenance.

On the face of it, these varied artifacts would seem to suggest that, sexually speaking, there's nothing really new under the sun. An occasional "two women copulating" or "threesome of two men and a woman" aside, most of the plates show the kind of "male-female couple on bed" stuff that's likely to put the average reader in a wistful, *plus ça change* mood, one for which the ability to decline *fellatrix* properly is hardly necessary. And gay men who have had occasion to raise a skeptical eyebrow at the (in?)famous conclusion of Sir Kenneth Dover's magisterial *Greek Homosexuality* (1978)—that Greek male-male sex typically culminated in nothing more than "intercrural" (i.e., between-the-thighs) intercourse—will be relieved to find the good ol' fashioned kind depicted with refreshing bluntness by the no-nonsense Romans. (The Warren Cup shows a youth "easing himself onto his partner's penis while holding on to a strap"—a characteristically poker-faced description on Clarke's part.)



Although it's always nice to have a lofty excuse to look at dirty pictures, readers who do only that will be missing out on what makes Clarke's book noteworthy. A professor of art history at the University of Texas at Austin and the incoming president of the College Art Association, Clarke eschews present-day assumptions about sex in order to recover the meanings his erotic images may have had in the Roman world, "a world," he writes, "before Christianity, before the Puritan ethic, before the association of shame and guilt with sexual acts." Although this may be a bit too generous (there's plenty of evidence that the ancients could be as uptight about sex as anyone else), Clarke's efforts to situate his artworks in their original contexts yield provocative results. It's only after you see the Pompeian frescoes in their architectural settings, as Clarke demonstrates, that it occurs to you to

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ask what it was like "visiting someone's house and seeing fresco paintings depicting sexual activity on the walls of the best room." Clarke's answers to this and many other questions are unexpected. The Roman world, he concludes, was one in which pictures of cunnilingus or threesomes on the living-room wall, far from being "pornographic," were symbols of "luxury, pleasure, and high status" and stood as visual emblems of a society in which "sexual pleasure and its representation stood for positive social and cultural values."

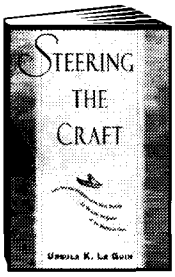
"I find that headaches are relieved by tying a woman's brassiere on my head," wrote Pliny.

If Clarke's analysis seems to bear out his claim that "the Romans are not at all like us in their sexuality," so do the texts explored in *Roman Sexualities*, edited by University of Maryland's Judith P. Hallett and University of Arizona's Marilyn B. Skinner. Although it rightly acknowledges its indebtedness to Hellenists like John Winkler, David M. Halperin, and Froma I. Zeitlin, whose 1990 collection *Before Sexuality* (Princeton) did much to legitimize the study of ancient, primarily Greek sexuality on this side of the Champs-Élysées, the Hallett-Skinner volume does much to justify the deletion of the hyphen in Greco-Roman, and lives up to its promise to "demonstrate that Roman constructions of sex should constitute a discrete research area within the general field of ancient sexuality."

The book begins, on a note of appropriate gravitas, with an examination of what made a man manly in ancient Rome. (The answer: basically, not getting fucked by another man.) After this first essay, the book's rhetoric ascends into a theory-scented empyrean. In "The Teretogenic Grid," University of Cincinnati's Holt N. Parker argues that sex acts per se were stripped of moral meaning in Rome; it was, rather, the "persona" one adopted while engaging in these acts that suggested any moral coloration. "Roman sexuality was a structuralist's dream," Parker asserts, and like all good structuralists, he's got a chart to prove it: His comes complete with an x-axis dedicated to orifices ("Vagina—Anus—Mouth") and a y-axis that consists of persons and attitudes (Male/Female, Active/Passive). On the grid itself, you'll find vocabulary you never saw in Latin 202: *cunnilinctor, fellatrix, fututor,* et (as they say)

A Revealing Look

Steering the Craft
Exercises and Discussions on Story Writing for the Lone Navigator or the Mutinous Crew
by Ursula K. Le Guin



A master storyteller generously shares the accumulated wisdom of a lifetime's work. Ursula K. Le Guin offers an exhilarating workout for prose writers at all stages of development. *Steering the Craft* is concerned with the "basic elements of narrative: how a story is told, what moves and what clogs it, right down on the level of elements of language." *(The Eighth Mountain Press) paperback, 20% discounted price: $11.96**

A History of Gay Literature
The Male Tradition
by Gregory Woods

This important book is the first full-scale account of male gay literature across cultures and languages and from ancient times to the present. A work of reference, as well as the definitive history of a tradition, it traces writing by and about homosexual men from ancient Greece and Rome through the Middle Ages and Renaissance to the twentieth-century gay literary explosion. *(Yale Univ. Press) hardcover, 20% discounted price: $31.96**

Cubana
Contemporary Fiction by Cuban Women
Mirta Yáñez, ed.

Cubana, the U.S. edition of a groundbreaking 1996 anthology of Cuban women's fiction, introduces these once-ignored writers to a new audience. Until recently, a Cuban old boys' network and ideological emphasis on "tough" writing worked to keep the fiction written by these women unknown. This book is a unique view into a culture experiencing economic hardship and artistic renaissance. *(Beacon Press) paperback, 20% discounted price: $10.00**

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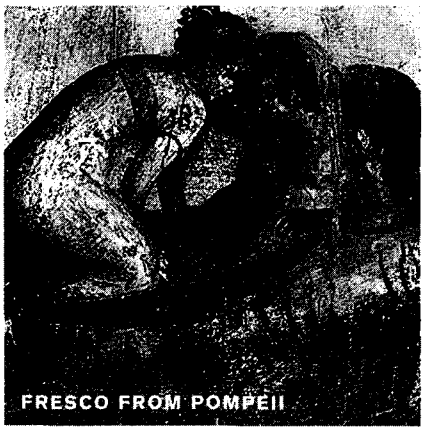
cetera. My college Latin professor genteelly translated *irrumator,* which appears in Catullus 16—and was conspicuously absent from our Learner's Dictionary—as "bastard." Who knew it really stood for someone who belonged at the intersection of Person: Active-Male and Orifice: Mouth?

Occasional flights of stylistic self-indulgence aside (and who can resist an article with subheadings like "The Ontological Status of Cunnilingus"?), these essays answer questions that probably never crossed your mind as you watched *Ben Hur*. One contribution sheds light on why "overeating, naked dancing, [and] telling jokes [were] three activities guaranteed to curtail any young Roman's political aspirations." (Not, as it turns out, simply because the decadent dinners at which these things were likely to happen were redolent of the suspect culture of the Greek East, but because in Roman thinking any one brand of morally suspect behavior was likely to implicate you in any other. So telling jokes at soirées implied you were sexually deviant.)

USC feminist scholar Amy Richlin's deliciously titled "Pliny's Brassiere" ("I find that headaches are relieved by tying a woman's brassiere on my head," the naturalist once asserted) begins perilously, with a gratuitous reference to *Our Bodies, Ourselves.* But, because Richlin focuses on Pliny—who hated the Greek-dominated medical establishment—the essay ends up a useful survey of popular, specifically *Roman* attitudes toward women's bodies. (The final section is called "Beyond Lingerie": One wonders why there aren't more classics majors these days.)

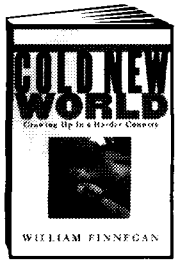

FRESCO FROM POMPEII

It's a pity that, in volumes dedicated to sweeping the cobwebs of straitlaced patriarchy from frequently ribald and always revealing classical texts, some rather Victorian conventions persist. One in particular deserves to go the way of Pompeii. The strangulated faux modesty of acknowledgments that conclude with "The strengths of the argument, such as they are, are due to others; its flaws remain my sole responsibility"—a staple of classics publications—is as pinched and unconvincing as Pliny's ad hoc headwrap. Isn't it time to burn that bra?

DANIEL MENDELSOHN

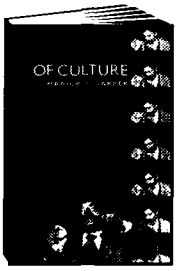
at Literature and Culture

Cold New World
Growing Up in a Harder Country
by William Finnegan



Cold New World is groundbreaking journalism in the tradition of J. Anthony Lukas's *Common Ground* or Nicholas Lemann's *The Promised Land*. "A new American class structure is being born," writes William Finnegan. He shows us this disturbing new social trend in harsh and intimate portraits of young Americans. *(Random House) hardcover, 20% discounted price: $20.80**

Symptoms of Culture
by Marjorie Garber



Marjorie Garber, cultural critic and Shakespearean authority on cross-dressing, bisexuality, and canine amours, is our diagnostician of anxiety. Assessing our tics and obsessions, she exposes the questions that lie beneath our everyday uncertainties. *(Routledge) hardcover, 20% discounted price: $20.00**

The Edge of the Bed
How Dirty Pictures Changed My Life
by Lisa Palac

Next-wave pornographer and cybersex pioneer Lisa Palac is frank and funny in this unique personal history. Using her own experiences as a framework, she asks the questions so many women and men have asked themselves: why do sexual desires and sexual politics seldom agree? Why is danger so erotic? Is cybersex bringing people ecstasy or alienation? *(Little Brown) hardcover, 20% discounted price: $18.36**

* Prices good through July 22, 1998.

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MEAN MACHINE

THE MOOD WAS SMUG AT THE NYU INTERACTIVE Telecommunications Program's 1992 Christmas party. With an eggnog buzz surging through their veins, the revelers stood boldly on the edge of digital innovation, swapping tales of interactive technologies that would liberate the user from the rigid hierarchies of the old information regimes.

But among the young pioneers of tomorrow, there was one student who didn't share the enthusiasm. Eric Swenson believed his master's program was founded on a mistake. *Interactivity was a lie*. And at the Christmas party that night, Swenson and his partner in crime, Keith Seward, would unleash their monster: an interactive program bent on enslaving its user.

According to Swenson, he invited his classmates to sit down, dimmed the lights, and launched the assault. Shots of cadavers and genitals, fragments of Baudrillard and free verse, flashed against the wall to a soundtrack of shrieking women and children. It was not long before the protests began. There were pleas to turn down the sound. The programmers replied calmly: "We can't." There was more shrieking—this time from the audience. "Where is the stop button?" one student asked.

"There is none."

"Well, that's bad interface design."

"No," the programmers replied. "This is perfect interface design."

The party was over.

The program that turned heads and stomachs that fateful night would become *BLAM!1*, the first in a series of three CD-ROMs published by Swenson and Seward's self-described "devil's advocacy group," Necro Enema Amalgamated (NEA).

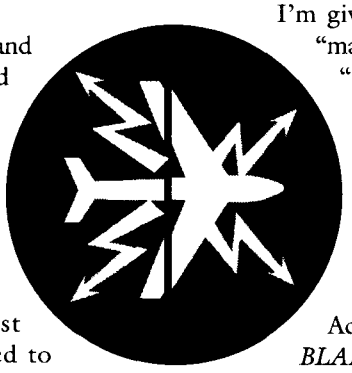
BLAM!1, which *Wired* magazine called "some of the most annoying content ever mastered to disc," poses as an electronic 'zine. You'll find the requisite underground contributors (Rita Ackermann, Jim Goad), a high-theory translation ("The Cruel Exercise of Art"), and the cut-and-paste, black-and-white aesthetic of the e-'zine's print cousin. But as the instructions suggest—*Double-click the BLAM! icon. Sit back and bark like a dog*—the 'zine format is simply a come-on for "a textbook in user manipulation." Forget interactivity. This is "offense and defense." NEA doesn't hide behind the friendly interfaces and cute icons of your family Mac, but straddles your screen and cracks the whip.

On my first visit, I click on "This Is Your Final Warning!" by Th. Metzger (not to be confused with Tom Metzger, the skinhead leader of White Aryan Resistance—he doesn't make an appearance until *BLAM!2*). After skimming a few lines of ranting verse, I opt to exit. I'm quickly punished by the author and sentenced to an even longer poem: "Devil in a Dead Man's Underwear." From here, there is no escape, except by cutting the power, which I do. Next time around, I click on "Ode to Interactivity," and for an unspeakable duration, I'm flashed dirty pictures and nasty nursery rhymes by a poet-programmer whose "proclivity is interactivity." I try to resist, I do, but my trusty cursor, the helping hand of interactivity, has disappeared.

Seward, who created "Ode," theorizes the stunt as follows: "What if you had a choice but it was between two equally terrible alternatives? What if your button clicking necessarily triggered the most heinous rapes, murders, and so on? I wanted 'Ode' to embody such dilemmas but then I removed the interactivity."

BLAM! is a shell game specializing in humiliation. Users aren't users at all; they're just used. In "Fever," by Rita Ackermann, I'm required to advance the story by clicking on the crotch of a weeping nymphet. My only "choice" is forward, and I click away complicitly, conscious of the *BLAM!* boys fingering my own buttons: shame...arousal...boredom.

When "Fever" has passed, I'm ready for recess. "Are you sure you want to quit?" the screen asks. I'm given three choices: "yes," "no," "maybe." A sucker for novelty, I choose "maybe." The screen jumps to a diagram of a baby being yanked from the womb by a pair of forceps, accompanied by the message, "There is no room in our society for cowardly, indecisive milksops like you."



So why all the user hostility? According to the "NEA Agenda," *BLAM!* seeks to explode the promise of

ALL IMAGES FROM BLAM!/COURTESY NEA

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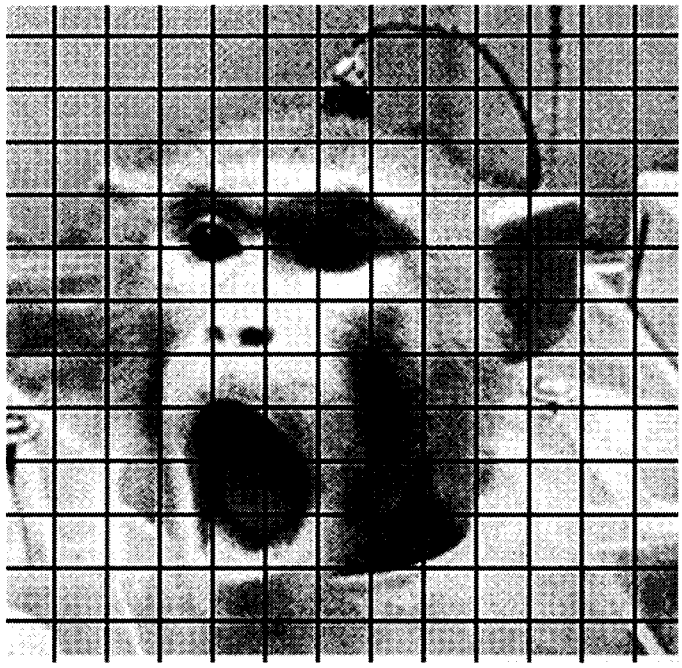
liberation and empowerment through interactivity—a promise that has reverberated from the 1940s to today, from the predigital hypertext pioneer Vannevar Bush to the poststructuralist hypertext pundit George Landow. If you're unfamiliar with the tune, stroll through COMP USA, flip through *Wired*, surf the Net, or sit in on a new-media workshop. You're sure to hear songs of freedom in the air. Even technophobes are singing along. My mother won't touch a computer, but she still believes that it would make her life a whole lot easier. In manipulating the user to a parodic extreme, *BLAM!* muffles the liberation song with the moans of sadistic programmers and the groans of frustrated users. NEA doesn't just endeavor to show us how we are controlled by allegedly interactive programs—it revels in the spectacle of our enslavement.

Where George Landow champions hypertext as a Barthesian idyll in which "the reader [is] no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text," *BLAM!* seeks nothing less than to produce obedient consumers. The questionnaire at the beginning of *BLAM!1* allows users to write themselves into the text, then exploits the information to flood him, or her, or hir (as the possibilities allow), with demographically targeted advertisements; these range from the hip and highbrow Zone Books to a listing of phone-sex numbers. Unlike the blandishments of television, the ads cannot be dodged with the remote control. *BLAM!1*'s "intelligent narrowcast advertising engine" and "forced content streaming" provide multimedia with the tools Madison Avenue had once only dreamed about.

But how ironic are all the hard sells and heavy-handed programming? Does *BLAM!* indict the programmers for controlling the user—or encourage them? NEA is far too devilish to provide a simple morality tale. In this endless hall of mirrors, I never know if *BLAM!*'s creators are laughing with me or at me. Perhaps they have been pushing my buttons all along. Perhaps somewhere in those subliminal flashes, NEA suggested that I target their product to the *Lingua Franca* demographic.



BLAM! is a shell game in which users aren't users at all; they're just used.

If you feel yourself itching to run out and buy *BLAM!*, be warned: Paranoia is just one of the side effects of this lesson in user manipulation. Others may include power and prestige. Eric Swenson, the black sheep of NYU's Interactive Telecommuniciations Program, is now director of production for a major international media company. He is also imparting his dubious wisdom to a whole new generation of programmers at Pace University in a course titled "Electronic Publishing (Foundations of Manipulative New Media)." A little user paranoia might be healthy.

BRETT SIMON

COURTESY NEA

PERMANENT PRESS

THE PHYSICAL LIFE OF A BOOK—ITS PEREGRINAtions from printer to warehouse to bookstore to reader—has always seemed an immutable reality in the publishing world. But these are baffling times. The advent of affordable print-on-demand technology has consigned hundreds of titles to a contingent, hypothetical realm. Ask your local bookstore, "Do you have a copy of Robert MacArthur's *Geographical Ecology: Patterns in the Distribution of Species*?" and the answer might be not yes or no but, "Only if you want one."

Lightning Print—an offshoot of giant book wholesaler Ingram Book Group—now offers to print any title from a list of books submitted by participating publishers. Using the latest in digital printing technology, Lightning Print can spit out finished books in the exact quantities customers request—and, claims Y.S. Chi, the company's president, "We can print and bind a book in less

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than a minute." The books are sold at their list price; the original publisher retains the copyright; and Lightning Print cuts the publisher a check at the usual wholesale price, minus production costs. "Ingram is making an investment for the whole book industry," says Chi. "We really think this is necessary."

Print on demand offers publishers a way out of a disagreeable dilemma. On the one hand, when publishers sell out their supply of a slow-moving book, they do not want to issue a thousand-copy reprint that will most likely cost more in warehouse space than it will ever pay for in sales. ("If I can't pay for my inventory with a year's sales," says Indiana University Press director John Gallman, "it's problematic.") On the other hand, they do not want to declare a book out of print—and unavailable—simply because its sales could not justify a reprint.

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Every season, backlist editors make difficult decisions, putting some books out of print despite a low but steady ongoing demand and taking a loss on others, reprinting them in quantities unlikely to sell out in ten years, if at all. Says Princeton University Press reprints editor Deborah Tegarden: "There are all kinds of imponderables involved in these decisions—the prestige of the author, the press's desire to grow in a certain discipline or to maintain a solid base."

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Digital printing technology, primarily in the form of the Xerox DocuTech printer, has existed for almost a decade, but few presses have been able to reap its benefits without substantially raising cover prices. Ordinary offset printing incurs the bulk of its costs in setup charges—a onetime, initial hurdle, which means that the more books you print, the more cost effective printing becomes. Digital printing, on the other hand, works the other way around. By combining the functions of a scanner, a computer, a printer, and a sorter into one machine, a digital printer requires few, if any, setup costs. Still, costs per copy are higher than offset—meaning, in the end, that it is only cost

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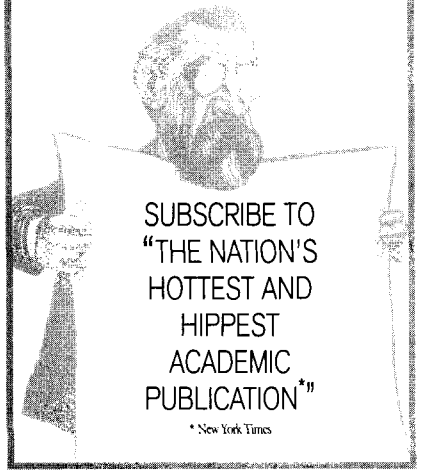

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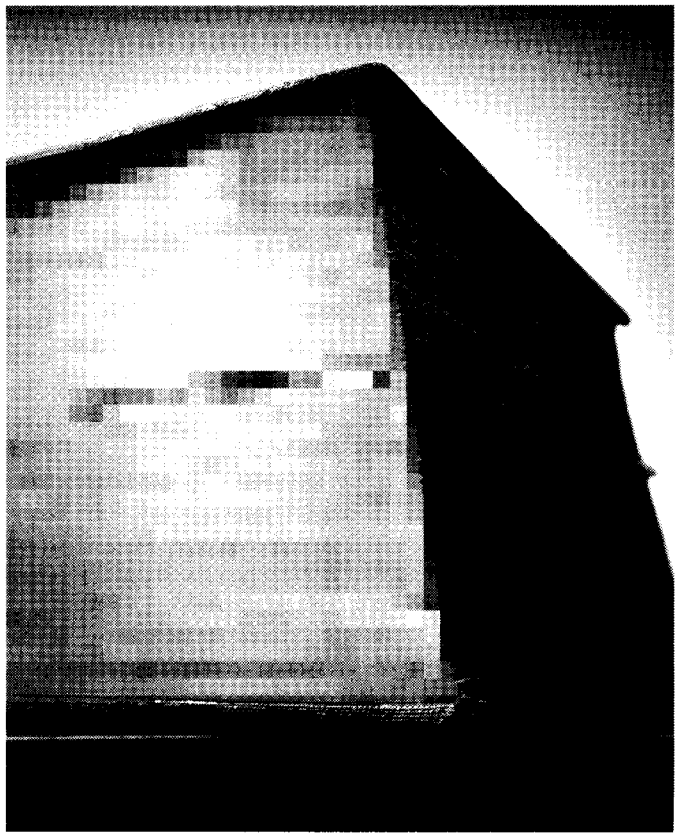
effective for very short print runs. Princeton's Tegarden suggests that cost-effective print-on-demand programs are best suited to less populous disciplines that have been hard to publish by traditional means, such as medieval studies. "These are books that have a strong community commitment," she explains. "All medievalists may want to buy a new book in the field, but there just aren't that many of them."

Fitting the new technology snugly into this niche has proved surprisingly challenging. The machines themselves cost up to half a million dollars and can be more than twenty feet long. In addition, the costs of filling orders—taking requests, outsourcing production to a DocuTech printing plant, and shipping small quantities to customers—can be prohibitive. So far, presses that have experimented with print on demand have had to raise prices to compensate for these expenses: Indiana University Press, which uses a DocuTech plant for short-run titles like *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers,* raises cover prices on those books by 10 to 20 percent.

By consolidating printing and shipping (stores place their orders directly with Ingram, where the books are printed and dispatched), Lightning Print may finally make print on demand a viable



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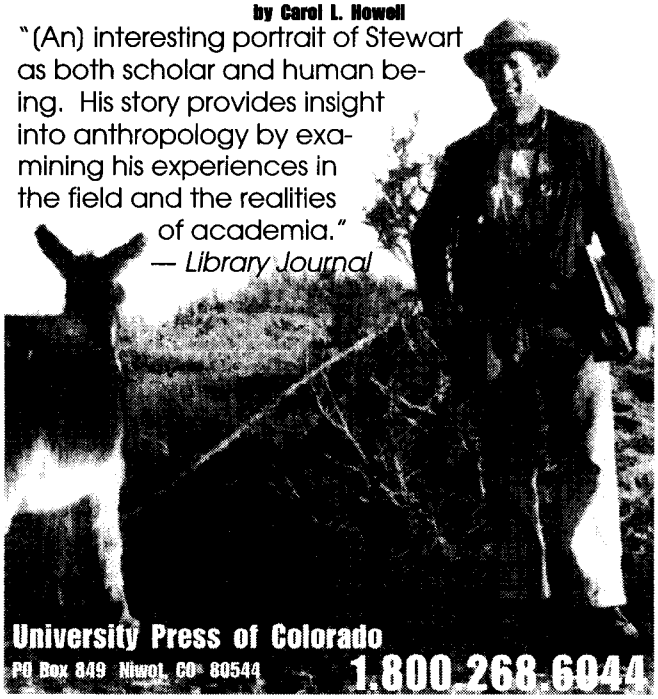

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option without price hikes. The La Vergne, Tennessee plant uses a high-resolution IBM InfoPrint 4000 printer and a state-of-the-art binder to produce finished books that, according to Lightning Print general manager Larry Brewster, are indistinguishable from paperbacks printed the old-fashioned way. Already, the company has an eclectic digital library, including lesser-known works by novelists like Doris Lessing, Philip K. Dick, and Arthur Conan Doyle as well as specialized scholarly titles like *Working Class Formations: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States,* edited by Ira Katznelson and A. R. Zolberg (Princeton, 1986), and Vivian Sobchack's *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (Princeton, 1992). Participating publishers include John Wiley & Sons, W.W. Norton, Random House, Basic Books, University of Nebraska Press, and Princeton University Press, among others.

So will publishers now be pulping overstock and turning books over to the digital realm—where they will have to be printed all over again, on demand? Princeton's Tegarden says it's a possible but only temporary scenario. Eventually, she believes, publishers will adjust to the new technology by issuing more modest print runs of specialized books in the first place. Of course, the prospect of the hypothetical, only-if-you-want-one book might strike fear in the hearts of some authors, who already suspect that the amount of attention they get from their press's marketing department is directly proportionate to their book's initial print run. Tegarden, however, has another concern: If nothing goes out of print anymore, a press may find itself scrambling to maintain a vast, if virtual, backlist. "Ours is already huge and uncharted," she says. "And there will be more active authors who will need to be dealt with, more prices that will need to be reviewed."

Of course, even if print on demand enables university presses to keep some books in print a little longer, it is not a panacea. The major conundrum facing scholarly presses remains—namely, how to continue to publish monographs as university subsidies and library sales decline. The bulk of a university press's expenses comes not from warehousing and printing books but from editing and marketing them, whether we read them in hard cover, paperback, Lightning Print, or on the Web. And perhaps that's as it should be: It's a book's most intangible qualities that are most enduring in the end.

LAURA SECOR

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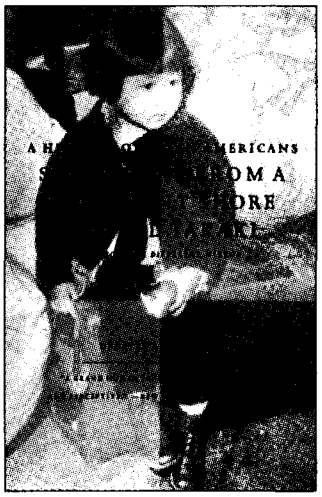

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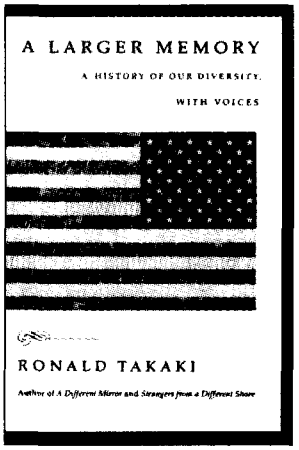

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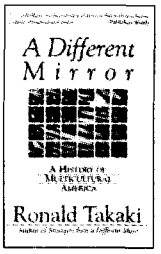

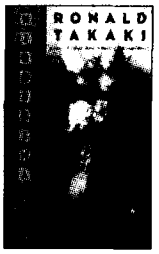

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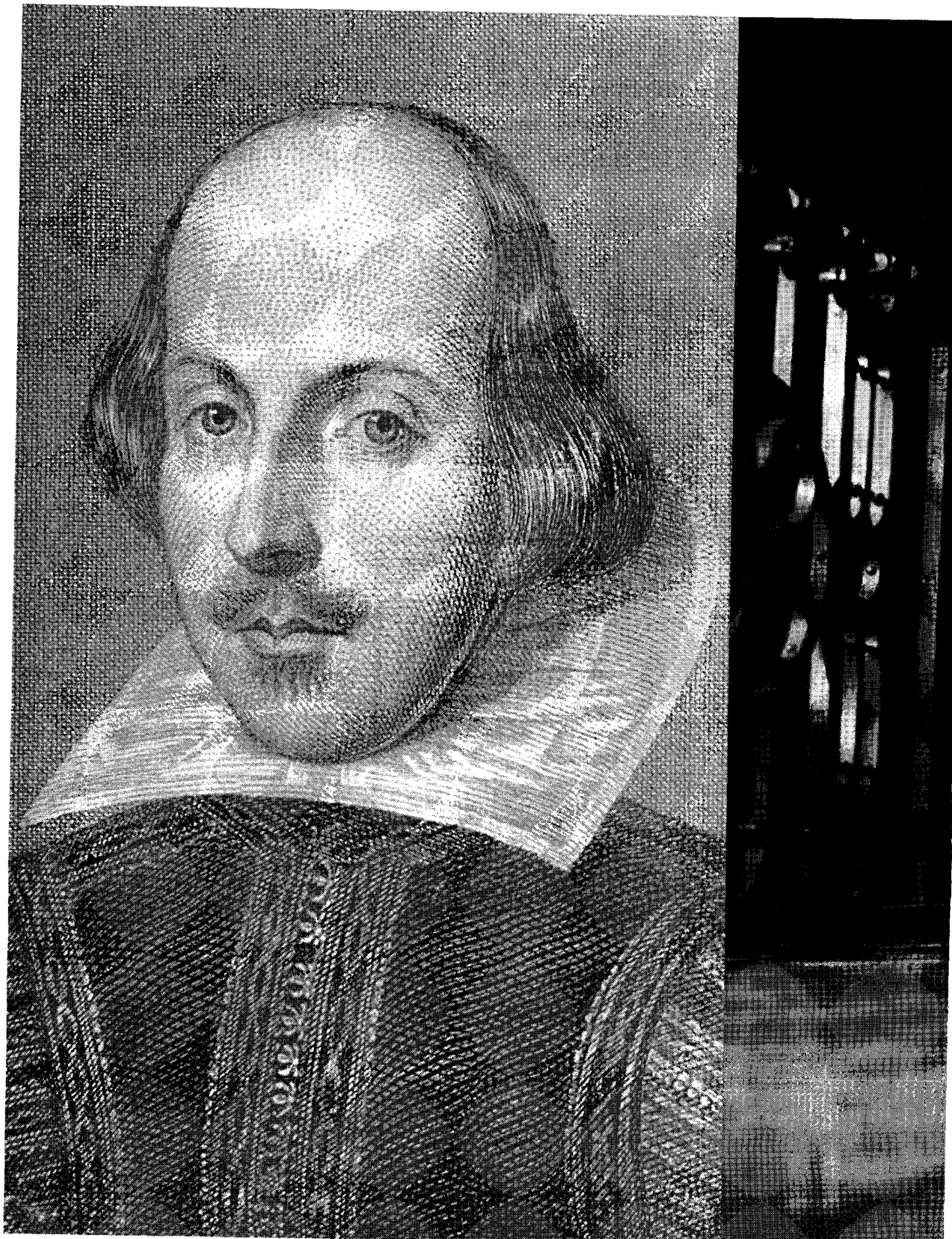

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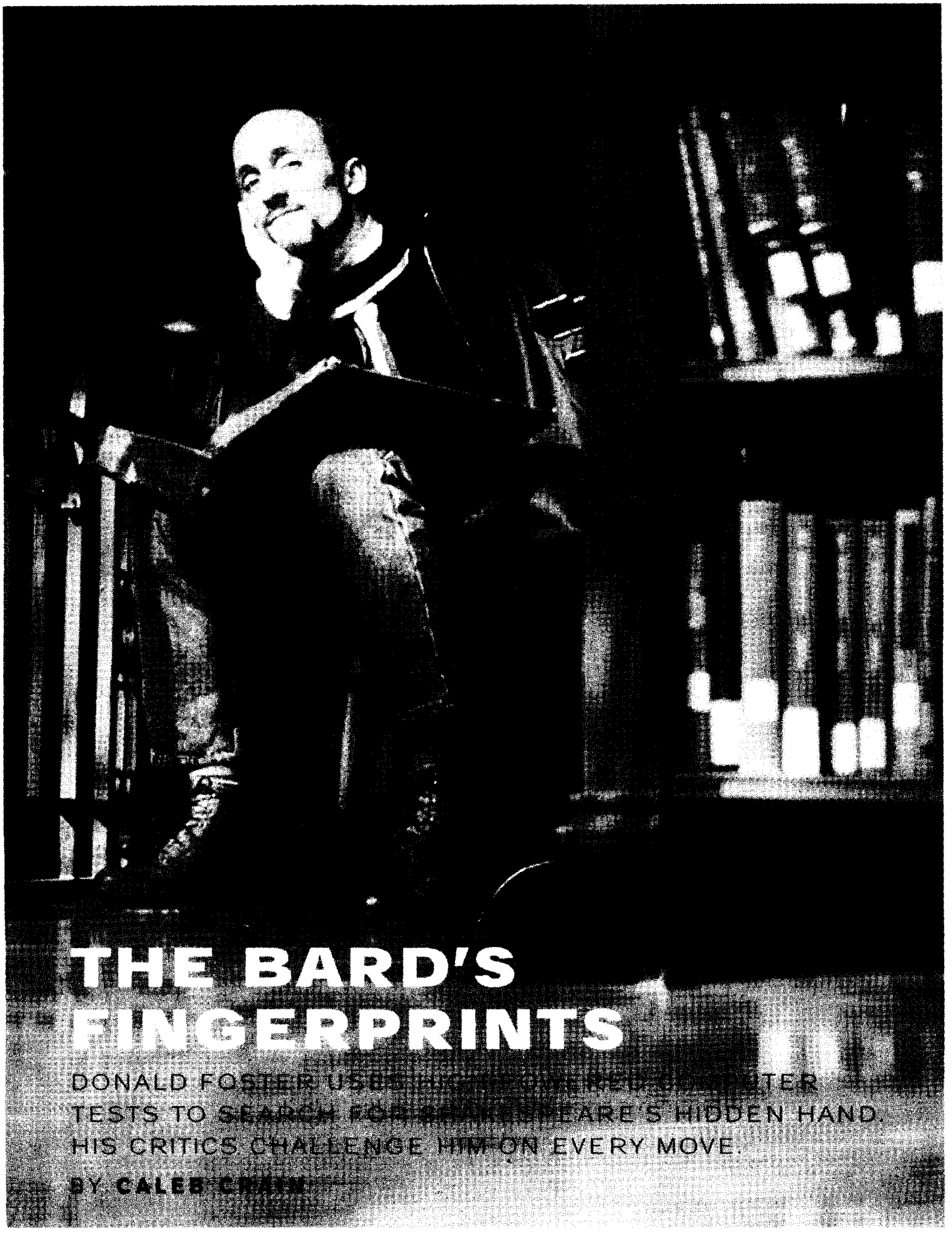

THE BARD'S FINGERPRINTS

DONALD FOSTER USES HIGH-POWERED COMPUTER TESTS TO SEARCH FOR SHAKESPEARE'S HIDDEN HAND. HIS CRITICS CHALLENGE HIM ON EVERY MOVE.

BY CALEB CRAIN

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He proves by algebra that Hamlet's grandson is Shakespeare's

1

"DOWNN, DOWNN, UNWUWY JADES," Donald Foster intones, Elmer Fudd-like. The forty-eight-year-old Vassar English professor is reciting Shakespeare as delivered by his son at age three. "Down, down I come like glist'ring Phaethon, / Wanting the manage of unruly jades" were Richard II's original lines, which Foster used to quote as a joke whenever he descended the stairs at home. "He had picked this up and was throwing it back at me," Foster explains of his son's performance. "This is the way we all work; we just don't realize or acknowledge it."

Foster finds authors in texts. He reads patterns of vocabulary and style as the fingerprints a writer leaves on language. Whom you quote is one kind of linguistic fingerprint; a toddler who invokes unwuwy jades might well be the son of a Shakespeare professor, for example. Foster has built a career out of inferences like this. Or rather, a couple of careers, because Foster's work in attribution has led him down two different roads. As a Shakespearean, he claims to be the first scholar since the nineteenth century to have uncovered a genuine new work by the Bard: a rather plain funeral elegy for a young gentleman who died in a squabble over a horse. As a forensic linguist, on the other hand, Foster is wanted by the FBI and by police around the country. In 1996 he testified that Theodore Kaczynski wrote the Unabomber manifesto. On his desk today are four thick plastic binders of analysis for the Boulder police department, whose investigation into JonBenét Ramsey's murder centers on an anonymous ransom note.

The skills developed by Foster the Shakespearean have made Foster the forensic linguist very good at matching authors to their texts: In February 1996 he fingered Joe Klein as the author of *Primary Colors*. But the Shakespeare attribution that launched Foster's career is currently under attack. In Britain, Shakespeare dons find Foster's computer-assisted analysis an affront to their carefully trained aesthetic sensibilities. Meanwhile, in California, technophile Shakespeare amateurs find his text crunching flawed. If Foster's Shakespeare attribution—the cornerstone of his academic career—is undermined, will his forensic career also topple?

Foster admits he doesn't have much room for error. "All I need to do is get one attribution wrong ever, and it will discredit me not just as an expert witness in civil and criminal suits but also in the academy." He smiles nervously. "So far, I've got a fine record going."

2

Despite his gray hair and bald top, Foster does not look like a tenured professor. He's too wiry and vigilant. Dressed in jeans, a T-shirt with a hamburger-restaurant logo, and cross-trainer athletic shoes, he looks more like a student who has just pulled an all-nighter but is still eager to make a good impression in class. He speaks with the overcaution of a drunk driver who can see the police in his rearview mirror.

Raised in Chicago and California, Foster studied psychology and sociology as an undergraduate at Wheaton College in Illinois, the alma mater of the Reverend Billy Graham. After graduation, he backpacked around the world with his brother. Then he got married, sold the wedding presents, and backpacked for another year with his wife. At age thirty, after stints working in a bookstore and teaching in a high school, he enrolled in UC-Santa Barbara's English Ph.D. program.

Foster never intended to specialize in attribution. As a graduate student, he stumbled into it while solving an old puzzle. In 1609, the printer Thomas Thorpe had dedicated his edition of Shakespeare's sonnets to "W.H." Thorpe called W.H. the poems' "onlie begetter." Did "begetter" mean "author" or "inspirer"? Were W.H. the initials of the fair youth whom Shakespeare loved? For Oscar Wilde and hundreds of others, W.H. proved to be a homoerotic biographical tar baby. Foster dispatched the mess. In a prizewinning essay later published in *PMLA*, he neatly demonstrated that "W.H." was no more than a misprint of "W. SH." Shakespeare's full name, after all, was printed clearly on the title page.

But Foster buried one Shakespearean conundrum only to unearth another. While scanning a microfilm of other Thorpe publications, he discovered *A Funerall Elegye in memory of the late Vertuous Maister William Peeter*. Exit W.H., and enter W.S., this elegy's unknown author. At first read, W.S.'s style struck Foster as uncannily Shakespearean, so he invested a pocketful of dimes to make a printout of the poem, that would become the subject of his dissertation and then his first book.

William Peter (1582–1612) was a gentleman from Exeter who studied at Oxford for nearly a decade. He left school in 1608, married in 1609, and was murdered by his kinsman Edward Drew in January 1612. Drew had defaulted on a loan for a horse, and he was furious at Peter for finking about it to Drew's mother. After Drew, his brother, and Peter spent a long day of uneasy drinking together, Peter galloped toward home down a darkening road. Drew spurred his horse in pursuit, and just outside Exeter's city walls he stabbed the twenty-nine-year-old scholar through the back of the skull.

The burden of *A Funerall Elegye* is to say that Peter deserved better than this sordid end. The tragedy of *A Funerall Elegye* is that in 578 lines it says little else. As W.S. himself explains, on the topic of

PREVIOUS PAGES: CULVER PICTURES (LEFT) SUZANNE OPTON (RIGHT)

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grandfather and that he himself is the ghost of his own father.
—James Joyce, *Ulysses*

William Peter, "the sum of all that can be said / Can be but said that 'He was good.'" W.S. nonetheless used many more than three words to say as much. Ready for printing just nineteen days after Peter's murder, the elegy jogs along with a fluent meter and an unstrained rhyme that suggest a skilled, practiced poet. W.S. writes with Shakespeare's compact syntax and something of the polished grandeur of the late plays. But W.S.'s imagery is barren, and his character as a writer is prudish. It's possible, of course, that W.S. is a sensuous author who on this occasion has censored himself into decorous generalities so as not to offend the bereaved. But the poem has few fans.

Not even Foster argues that the elegy is good poetry. "I don't stay at home nights reading the funeral elegy for William Peter," he says. Attribution does not concern itself with aesthetic quality. But in beauty's absence, the pains Foster took in his *Elegy by W.S.: A Study in Attribution* are remarkable. In this book, Foster argued that W.S.'s language was Shakespearean in its verbal quirks—its unusual diction, frequency of certain words, choice of rhymes, high use of enjambment, pattern of word length, and habits of hyphenation. For his Shakespeare stats, Foster was able to turn to a computer-generated concordance prepared by Marvin Spevack in 1968. But for his non-Shakespeare cross sample, Foster had to count the old-fashioned way—by hand. "Nothing," he observed in a footnote late in the book, "could persuade me to undertake another study that would require the same manual labors."

Numerically, if not poetically, the elegy rewarded Foster's efforts, passing every test he devised. Nonetheless, he presented his results modestly. "That W.S.'s *Funerall Elegye* for William Peter was written by William Shakespeare is more than I know," Foster wrote, despite pages of data tables. He confessed that he thought W.S. was William Shakespeare, but he respectfully submitted that "it is a worldwide community of readers, not I, nor even W.S. himself, who will have the final word."

Behind the scenes, however, Foster was not so submissive. When Oxford University Press rejected his manuscript on the elegy, the anonymous reader's report noted that it was axiomatic that authorship could never be proved on internal textual evidence alone, and external evidence was lacking. Foster thought he recognized the reviewer's biting style, so he wrote back. "Not only can you tell something by internal evidence alone," Foster averred, "but if this isn't Sam Schoenbaum, it's a very good imitation."

CULVER PICTURES

Foster guessed right. "It was a cocky thing to do," he concedes today, "but it seemed necessary at the time." In what must be every academic's fantasy, Foster then proceeded to nail Oxford's second anonymous reader (Stanley Wells), as well as the author of a favorable report for Harvard University Press (G. Blakemore Evans). "I know who's written every report I've ever gotten," Foster boasts. "Sometimes I do them for friends."

But Foster's stunts failed to win him a big-name publisher. Attribution studies suffered a blow in 1985 when Gary Taylor wrongly assigned the ditty "Shall I die?" to Shakespeare, and Oxford then prematurely included it in the press's *Complete Works,* edited by Stanley Wells. A string of erroneous Shakespeare finds followed Taylor's, scaring reputable presses away from attribution studies in general.

Among the most vehement critics of the Oxford mistake was Foster, a fresh Ph.D., who worried that the British gaffe would render his own book unpublishable and himself unhirable. Despite these fears, however, Foster was hired by Vassar in 1986.

When the University of Delaware Press finally released his book in 1989, Foster set attribution to one side. He had nothing to gain, he felt, by pushing W.S. any harder. As he puts it today, "All it would take is for someone to come up with a letter saying, 'Dear John Peter [William's surviving brother], I hope you like my elegy. Love, Wally Smith,' and

COULD SHAKESPEARE HAVE WRITTEN AN ELEGY THAT SCHOLARS AGREE IS BAD POETRY? DONALD FOSTER SAYS HIS COMPUTER CAN PROVE IT.

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whoever endorses this attribution would be humiliated." Foster decided to pursue an anthology of early-modern women writers instead. He also started to tinker with an index of Shakespeare's rarest words, which he put on a computer disk and christened Shaxicon.

3

According to Ian Lancashire, a University of Toronto professor who edits the Early Modern English Dictionaries Database, there are three kinds of evidence that can be used to establish authorship: external, linguistic, and interpretive. A signed manuscript in an author's handwriting is external evidence. So is an author's name on a title page or a mention that links a writer to a text in a contemporary diary or letter.

Foster specializes in the second kind of evidence: linguistic. He hopes to find language habits that are distinctive enough to serve as an author's fingerprints. For example, in *Elegy by W.S.*, Foster showed that W.S. uses "who" several times to refer to an inanimate object that has not been personified. In the early seventeenth century, almost no one but Shakespeare used this kind of "incongruent 'who,'" so Foster argues that the quirk helps to identify W.S. as Shakespeare.

If authors leave traces of themselves in their texts, it's because the memory used to create language is what cognitive scientists call "procedural." That is, you don't remember how to make a sentence except by making one. You can edit a sentence after you've generated it, but you can't altogether control it while it's flowing out of you. As Lancashire writes, "During true composition, speakers are blind to the process that gives rise to the utterances they make."

Semiblind, actually. Any feature of language you pay attention to will yield to your conscious control. Thus, it's the patterns it wouldn't occur to you to alter that are most reliable as fingerprints. For instance, an author may use function words—short, all-purpose words like "and" and "but" whose frequency is unaffected by subject matter—in distinctive ratios. Function words are common. They tend to slip by the self-editing radar; you're unlikely to revise what you say or write in order to raise or lower your rates of "that" or "the." Function words have mathematical advantages too. Even a short text will contain enough of them for the sample to be statistically significant. And a count of them is immune to subjective influence; everyone can agree that the paragraph you are reading now contains seven instances of the word "of." The bulk of the tests in Foster's 1989 book measured features that were, like function words, "substylistic."

All this may sound scientific, but Lancashire nonetheless calls attribution by linguistic evidence a "science in waiting." Often, a substylistic feature that's distinctive and stable for one author varies randomly for another. It's as though every author has fingerprints, but while some have their fingerprints on the ends of their fingers, others have them on their noses or toes. In other cases, the substylistic marks typical of a given time period and genre may overstamp individual preferences. Or editors, proofreaders, and typesetters may have worked with such heavy hands as to smudge out the authorial quirks beneath.

DONALD FOSTER

SUZANNE OPTON/BIOGRAPHY

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FOSTER THINKS HIS SHAXICON DATABASE MAY PINPOINT THE ROLES SHAKESPEARE HIMSELF PERFORMED.

To make a sound attribution, then, you need to gather many different kinds of linguistic proof. Foster believes that his Shaxicon database offers a new kind of evidence. The theory behind Shaxicon is that it's not only an author's common words that are beyond his conscious control. If studied as a set, his rare words, too, will mark him.

Shaxicon is an electronic index of words that appear fewer than twelve times in the Shakespeare canon. "Aligarta" is in Shaxicon; so are "family" and "real," because they're rare for Shakespeare if not rare in any wider sense. Foster's early use of Shaxicon showed, predictably enough, that a Shakespeare play tends to share the most rare words with plays written just before or after it. Sometimes, though, a new play has an oddly high level of vocabulary overlap with a much older play. Foster guessed that these data spikes were due to the older play's returning to the repertory of Shakespeare's theater company while the new play was being written. A new production jogged its words back into the playwright's active memory. On closer analysis, it turned out that when rare words from an older play returned they tended to come from one or two speaking parts. Foster thinks Shaxicon pinpoints the roles Shakespeare himself performed.

Foster also thinks Shaxicon can testify in favor of an attribution. In 1613 Shakespeare and John Fletcher collaborated to write *Henry VIII*. When Foster used Shaxicon to analyze the 1612 *Funerall Elegye* and the portions of *Henry VIII* attributed to Shakespeare, he discovered that the two samples contained rare words from Shakespeare's canonical plays at roughly the same rates. The same mind, with the same verbal memory, Foster inferred, must have composed both.

The third kind of evidence named by Ian Lancashire—interpretive evidence—is the wobbliest. In a 1988 book review, Foster chided Mark Dominik for reading the disputed seventeenth-century play *The Birth of Merlin* as Shakespearean autobiography. Dominik thought he saw in *Merlin* Shakespeare coming to terms with his neglected, angry children. If you knew Shakespeare had written *Merlin*, you might make this interpretation of it. But until you do know that, even the most plausible psychological reading risks begging the question. Responding to Dominik, Foster scorned the circular logic that would use a critic's interpretation as evidence in a case for attribution, calling it one of "the worst mistakes of past attributional studies."

4

Nowadays, though, interpretive evidence is the technique of Foster's chief ally. In 1991 Richard Abrams, an English professor at the University of Southern Maine at Portland, approached Foster at a conference to say he'd read Foster's book and found the arguments sound. Abrams was also struck by parallels between the *Funerall Elegye* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, a 1613 play by Shakespeare and Fletcher about two loving cousins who feud until one dies on horseback. Abrams began to read the elegy as if it were Shakespeare's. No longer a drab wannabe, the elegy soon became in Abrams' eyes "an intimate document from the poet's final years." Doubters were guilty of "emotional resistance." To explain its banality, Abrams read the elegy as a palinode. Like Prospero bidding farewell to rough magic at the end of *The Tempest*, W.S. is Shakespeare surrendering his dangerous poetic gift. Alcoholic melodrama had killed his friend, and so "W.S. blames imagination for its role in Peter's murder," Abrams wrote. Furthermore, since William Peter was a plain man, W.S. composed a plain poem to match. "Harmonizing his style with the dead man's," Adamas concluded, "W.S. scrupulously mortifies his own habitual play of fancy."

Berkeley sonnet scholar Stephen Booth has caricatured Abrams's interpretation thus: "William Peter, a dull, plodding man who lived a dull, plodding life, was a good man. The dull, plodding *Funerall Elegye* is imitative of its dull, plodding subject, and is, if looked at in that light, a good poem." But Abrams's enthusiasm convinced Foster to dust off his case. Meanwhile, Foster's Shaxicon database was turning up new evidence.

To the Shakespeare Association of America in March 1995, and then to the Modern Language Association (MLA) in December of that year, Foster and Abrams presented the upgraded case for the *Funerall Elegye*. Though most of the evidence was nearly a decade old—such as W.S.'s use of the Shakespearean "incongruent who"—this time Foster pulled no punches. "A *Funerall Elegye* belongs hereafter with Shakespeare's poems and plays," Foster wrote in the published version of his talk. *The Chicago Tribune* covered the MLA panel. Then *The New York Times* put the story on its front page. Suddenly the *Funerall Elegye* was world news.

British scholars were aghast. First into the transatlantic breach was Stanley Wells, general editor of the Oxford Shakespeare and chairman of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Writing in the *Times Literary Supplement* (*TLS*) in January 1996, Wells called the elegy "tedious in a very unShakespearian way." Nor has the poem grown on him since. Asked today about Abrams's notion that it represents a "turn from the theatrical," Wells dismisses the argument as "special pleading": "It's no compliment to somebody, is it, to write in a boring way about them when they're dead."

But Wells admits aesthetics is somewhat beside the point, conceding that "great poets have written bad poems." And in fact, most objections by Wells and other British scholars have been not stylistic but biographical. In the *TLS* and then in *Shakespeare Studies*, Wells reminded Foster of the "obstacles to belief" that Foster himself had listed in his 1989 book: (1) A friendship between Peter and Shakespeare was unlikely, because they were separated by education, social milieu, fifty-five miles, and a twenty-year age difference. (2) Shakespeare's brother died and was buried in Stratford just when the *Funerall Elegye* was being composed.

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IN WHAT MUST BE EVERY ACADEMIC'S FANTASY, FOSTER SUCCESSFULLY IDENTIFIED THE AUTHORS OF HIS UNFAVORABLE READERS' REPORTS.

(3) W.S. refers to his "days of youth," and in 1612 Shakespeare was forty-seven. (4) Although W.S. sympathizes with "she who those nine of years / Liv'd fellow to [Peter's] counsels and his bed," Peter and his wife had been married for only three years. W.S.'s ignorance of the facts suggests he may have been a hired pen—a commission that Shakespeare, acclaimed and only semiretired, was far from needing to accept.

Foster finds none of these objections insurmountable. Shakespeare and Peter both seem to have known the playwright John Ford, so a direct friendship between the two is not inconceivable. No one knows whether Shakespeare attended his brother's funeral, or even cared to. W.S. may mean "youth" metaphorically, or he may be referring to it as a bygone. The passages in question are tricky to interpret. The nine-year bedmate might be simple error, or it might refer to a mistress Peter kept while at Oxford. (Fellows were not then allowed to marry.)

More intractable and less palpable is the conviction British critics have that Foster and Abrams's Shakespeare is not theirs. Class is one signal that seems to them to be pointing the wrong way. William Peter strikes Oxford lecturer and tutor Katherine Duncan-Jones as not quite grand enough. Why would Shakespeare have praised someone for dressing unadornedly, speaking little, and deliberately cultivating social obscurity? For Duncan-Jones's Shakespeare, "churning out a long elegy for a younger son of a fairly modest Devon gentry family seems a very dingy project."

Another aspect of W.S. to irk the British is his piety. As Brian Vickers of Zurich's Centre for Renaissance Studies complains, W.S. spends fifty lines arguing "that William Peter died a violent death, but so did Jesus Christ, and so did the Christian martyrs, and they're all in heaven." Vickers believes this is too straight-faced for Shakespeare, who never refers to religion except glancingly, and then often in jest. To Vickers's charge of excessive piety, Foster retorts that the *Funerall Elegye* is unique among its kind for failing to offer the bereaved the traditional consolation of resurrection in Christ. Instead, W.S. calls the hope of reunion in the afterlife "the weak comfort of the hapless."

A third red flag for the British is sexuality. In a letter to the *TLS*, Duncan-Jones derided "some of the poem's champions" who made it "sound more exciting by suggesting that it reflects the speaker's homoerotic affection for the dead man." Wells calls the notion of homosexual eroticism in the elegy "pure fiction." But Foster and Abrams deny they've ever made such a claim. "Terribly overdone," is how Abrams refers to media innuendo about the elegist's sexual orientation. The issue did receive a lot of media play, perhaps because it was news to *The New York Times* that most of Shakespeare's sonnets are love poems to a boy. "I wish it were homoerotic," says Foster now. "Then it would have something. It's about as erotic as cold broccoli."

The American team may be playing a bit coy on this issue. At the 1995 MLA convention, the University of Tulsa's Lars Engle did speculate whether William Peter might be the fair youth of the Sonnets. "He has the right first name," Engle noted, "and is the right age." And if William Peter were Shakespeare's love, it might explain W.S.'s frequent references to a mysterious scandal in his past. W.S.'s "sadder taste of knowing shame" might then be the "vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow" in Shakespeare's Sonnet 112.

To clinch their cases, the British critics have put forward other candidates for the elegy's authorship. In doing so, they most often counter Foster's linguistic evidence with external evidence. They rarely answer Foster's argument in the language in which he made it. Wells even insinuates that this is perhaps as it should be. "Most people who make a profession of the study of literature do so because they have an artistic rather than a scientific bent," Wells wrote in his first attack. "They are, to put it simply, better at English than at maths." Does Wells think computer-assisted analysis is of any use to literary study? "I don't think it's reached the stage yet of scientific sophistication where it's likely to be accepted even by those who do understand the math," he replies.

So the British are digging in their heels. Although in the United States, the Norton, Riverside, and Harper editions of Shakespeare all currently feature the *Funerall Elegye,* it isn't in the Oxford. If anyone were to try to put it there, "I should certainly resist it," says Wells. Duncan-Jones is now editing the Arden edition of Shakespeare's poems, and although she might choose to print the elegy as apocryphal, she feels no obligation to. After all, as she puts it, "Seldom has such a bad poem been so readily available."

When it comes to a contest between British Luddites and American scientists, we know who wins. In the long run, humanists armed with educated impressions tend to lose their campaigns against technicians armed with silicon and the ability to count. And so Donald Foster's most serious opponents in this debate are probably not the establishment British curmudgeons but a few computer-adept amateurs in California.

5

Patience and faith are prerequisites for authorship studies, and the Claremont Shakespeare Clinic began with a wacky but highly durable creed: that the works of William Shakespeare were written by someone else. Like his father before him, Ward Elliott, professor of government at Claremont McKenna College, believed "Shakespeare" was a hoax. The real author of the plays and poems, he thought, was Edward de Vere, the earl of Oxford. Elliott started the Claremont Shakespeare Clinic in 1987 to test his father's anti-Stratfordianism with computers.

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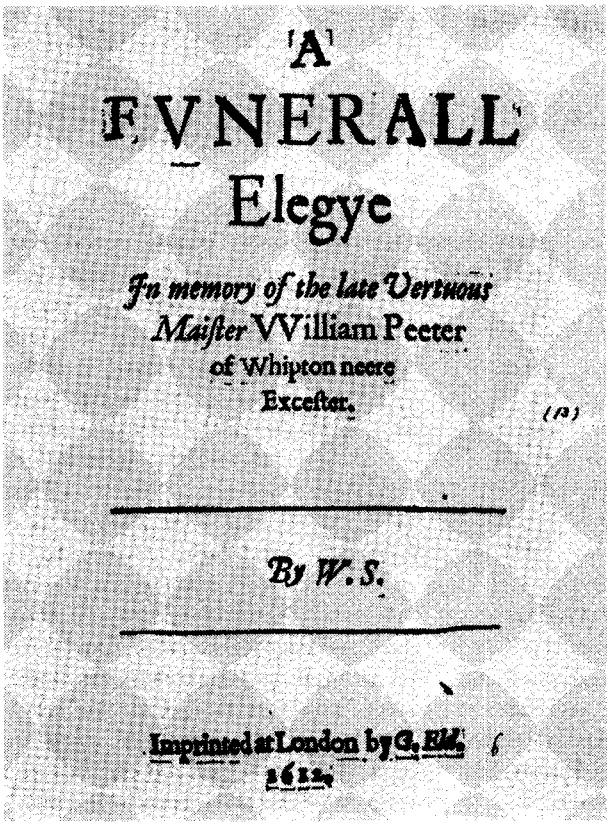
A
FVNERALL
Elegye
In memory of the late Vertuous
Maister William Peeter
of Whipton neere
Exceter.
By W. S.
Imprinted at London by G. Eld
1612.

What inspired Elliott was a clever study by two statisticians, Ronald Thisted and Bradley Efron. In 1976 Thisted and Efron tried to estimate the size of Shakespeare's vocabulary by asking "How many new words would Shakespeare use if he were to write another play?" Mathematically speaking, this question resembled another, which had already been answered: If a butterfly collector has already trapped *x* different species, what is the likelihood he will catch a new species on his next expedition? When Gary Taylor unveiled "Shall I die?" in 1985, Thisted and Efron had a chance to test their theory. They calculated that, given the poem's length, if it were Shakespeare's it should contain 6.97 words never before used by Shakespeare. In fact "Shall I die?" had nine new words, so the mathematicians gave it their blessing.

Curious, Elliott called Thisted to ask if tests like this could resolve the larger Shakespeare–de Vere controversy. Thisted said yes. So Elliott recruited Robert Valenza from Claremont's math department, solicited the Sloan Foundation for funds, and set up the Claremont Shakespeare Clinic. According to Elliott, Donald Foster served as an early adviser. When the clinic was compiling a pure Shakespeare baseline, Foster told Elliott which texts to set aside because their authorship was in dispute. "He steered us away from God knows how many pitfalls," says Elliott.

Cadres of undergraduates initiated and executed many of the tests, but Elliott and Valenza compiled their results. In 1991 the clinic's first report was published in the journal *Computers and the Humanities* (known to its text-geek fans as *CHum*). Seven tests ruled out every poet whom the clinic had suspected of being the true Shakespeare—including Elliott's favorite, deVere.

CHum printed the clinic's second report in 1996. No longer doubting the identity of Shakespeare, Elliott and Valenza shifted their focus, hoping their tests could help define the hazy borders of the Shakespeare canon. The 1996 report was impressive, offering fifty-one tests of Shakespeare-play authorship and fourteen of Shakespeare-poem authorship. Rather affably, Elliott does not present himself as an expert on attribution. His tests, he concedes, are better at determining that someone has *not* written a text than that they have. "Imperfect tests are like Cinderella's slipper," Elliott quips. "Only in a fairy tale can you prove that you are Cinderella because you and she both wear a size-five slipper." The most the test can say is you might be. But if you wear a size eight, then, sorry: The slipper does rule you out.

With his usual amiable goofiness, Elliott ended his clinic's 1996 report by denying that his was the last word, "even as the dust settles on what looks like a saturation-bombing of tests." It would turn out to be anything but the last word. W.S.'s *Funerall Elegye* had flunked two out of seven tests in the Shakespeare clinic's 1991 report. In the 1996 report, it suspiciously flunked five out of fourteen. Foster's British opponents, including Wells and Vickers, began to cite the Claremont results. An unhappy Foster had a few words to add.

Over the years, Elliott and the Shakespeare clinic had exasperated Foster. Despite Foster's advice, "such matters as editorial consistency in the copytexts, generic and chronological controls, and normalization of the data were shrugged off, year after year, as inconvenient," Foster would later write. Good relations between Foster and the Californians finally broke down at a UCLA conference on attribution in February 1996.

The conference was meant to be a victory celebration of sorts for Foster's *Funerall Elegye*. But during a question-and-answer period, Elliott stood up in the audience. Flanked by two assistants ("Marlovians," Foster grumbles), Elliott passed out thick, chart-filled copies of his clinic's latest report—with its critical assessment of Foster's *Elegye* attribution. It was a breach of academic decorum that alienated some of the scholars present. Foster's patience snapped. Soon after, he would cease to correspond with the Claremont team and arrange with the editors of *CHum* to publish a rebuttal in the same 1996 issue that featured Elliott and Valenza's work. Elliott now calls the conference "a total disaster from my point of view."

Foster's 1996 rebuttal slammed Elliott and Valenza as irresponsible meddlers who threatened to turn attribution studies into "a playground for fringe theories having no historical or computational validity." Elliott and Valenza's reply, published in *Shakespeare Quarterly* in 1997, painted Foster as a bully and a hoaxer, "trying to win too many points with bluster that he could not win honestly on the facts."

CHum is due to publish another response by Elliott and Valenza, with yet another rebuttal by Foster, sometime in 1998. Both Elliott and Foster "have been very, very trying," sighs *CHum* editor Nancy Ide, a colleague of Foster's at Vassar. She admits, however, that the issue of *CHum* with the Foster-Elliott feud has been the journal's best seller in years.

The UCLA conference coincided with a crucial moment in Foster's career. On the plane to California, he read a new roman à clef about the 1992 Clinton campaign, *Primary Colors*. Attracted by press coverage from Foster's *Funerall Elegye* attribution, *New York* magazine

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FOSTER RECALLS, "FOR SIX MONTHS, EVERYONE SAID: 'YOU WERE WRONG ABOUT PRIMARY COLORS. WHY SHOULD WE BELIEVE YOU ABOUT THIS FUNERAL ELEGY?'"

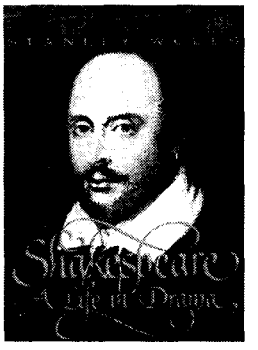
was pestering him to sleuth out the novel's anonymous author. The puzzle intrigued Foster, though as yet he had no leads.

A week later, a sleep-deprived Foster solved the mystery of *Primary Colors'* authorship. When *New York* magazine hesitated to let him write the piece himself—fearing perhaps that he would write like an academic—Foster threatened to sell the story to *The New York Observer*. *New York* capitulated, and the piece Foster turned in was witty, confident, and playfully nasty about not only the linguistic tics but also the apparent sexual and racial prejudices of the author he had unmasked. "The book struck me in some respects as homophobic," Foster says, "so I sort of tweaked him a little bit by saying his own sexual identity is unclear in the text."

Joe Klein was not pleased. When *CBS News* flew Foster down the Hudson River in a helicopter for an interview, Klein called his friend Dan Rather and, Foster surmises, told him to "piss on this story." Dan Rather seems to have obliged. The story ran, but Rather spun it in Klein's favor. Klein's employers at CBS and *Newsweek* would stand by his denial of authorship until July, when handwriting analysis confirmed that Foster had been correct from the start and Klein caved in. Until then, Foster says, "it was horrible. I went through six months of listening to people say, 'Well, you were wrong about *Primary Colors*. Why should we believe you about this *Funerall Elegye*?'" Foster's frustration during this trial in the wilderness may have sharpened the edge of the critique he wrote of Elliott and Valenza.

6

Elliott and Valenza joke that to a "Whitmanesque sensitivity," their analyses may "seem more like taking butterflies and grinding them up to find matching nucleotides than like looking up at them in perfect silence, like the stars." At the risk of grinding a few butterflies in the stomachs of *Lingua Franca* readers, here's a glimpse of the debate between the Claremont team and Foster.



Of the fourteen 1996 Claremont tests that were valid for poems, the *Funerall Elegye* flunked five.

(1) Claremont's "grade level" test fed Shakespearean texts to a piece of commercial software that rated their difficulty according to word and sentence lengths. Elliott and Valenza found that the *Funerall Elegye* has a higher difficulty level than other Shakespeare works. But word and sentence length often say more about a text's editor than its author, Foster noted, and the Claremont texts were edited inconsistently. Also, the *Funerall Elegye,* a long poem without breaks, would naturally tend to have longer sentences than plays, with their dramatic back-and-forth, or even than other Shakespeare poems, which are divided into stanzas. Elliott and Valenza conceded the point.

(2) Elliott and Valenza give near top billing to a series of tests they call bundles of badges (BoBs). Adapting a term first coined by Foster, Elliott and Valenza defined a *badge* as a word Shakespeare used more often than his contemporaries—sometimes only slightly more often. A *fluke* is a word he used less often. Elliott and Valenza grouped badges and flukes together in single tests. The test BoB5 counted the badges "the," "is," "to," "you," "he," "his," "your," "we," "him," "as," and "an" against the flukes "a," "sir," "I," "now," "I'll," "'tis," "all," "come," "her," and "she." The odd-sounding result: the elegy had too many of these badges and too few of the flukes. Its diction for these common words was too pronouncedly Shakespearean to be Shakespeare's.

Foster ingeniously disentangled the tests that Elliott and Valenza had bundled together in BoB5. BoB5 worked on most Shakespeare texts, Foster argued, because it selected for "you" and "your," thus accurately matching Shakespeare's usual preference for the formal "you" over the more personal "thou." In a similar way, by testing for "he," "his," and "him," and against "her" and "she," BoB5 judged according to the gender ratio common in Shakespeare plays: more male characters than female. The *Funerall Elegye,* however, exceeds even Shakespeare's usual preference for "he"s over "she"s, rendering its BoB5 score too high. But Foster pointed out that you shouldn't expect gender parity in a man's elegy for a man. To apply BoB5 to the elegy was to ask the rather inappropriate question, "If it's by Shakespeare, why does this funeral poem not have *more women* in it?" Yielding to Foster here too, the Claremont team rescinded the *Funerall Elegye's* BoB5 flunk.

(3) and (4) Microphrase tests measure how often syllables that would be stressed in normal speech lose their stress because of their placement in iambic verse. In practice, the tests are fiendishly difficult to administer. Elliott cheerfully admits that "a duffer like me" consistently undercounts the microphrases by 5 to 10 percent compared to the tests' inventor. Foster is incredulous that Elliott stands by tests he admits he can't adequately administer. But Elliott notes that Foster's test for incongruent "who" also requires judgment calls that may vary from tester to tester.

(5) When they compared the frequency of the word "no" in Shakespeare to the combined frequencies of "no" and "not," Elliott and Valenza found a distinctive ratio. The *Funerall Elegye* came out low—several "no"s too few—on this test. In response, Foster argues that "no" is more common in dramatic dialogue than in a nondramatic form such as an elegy, so one shouldn't find this result surprising. But in fact Shakespeare's nondramatic verse

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contains a slightly higher rate of "no"s than his plays do, so the Claremont team stands by this test.

In their 1997 *Shakespeare Quarterly* essay, Elliott and Valenza added a few brand-new tests that the *Funerall Elegye* flunks. Foster brushes them off: "I think I could probably find a lot of other phrases that the *Funerall Elegye* has too many of, too." However, the *Shakespeare Quarterly* piece also revisited an earlier doubt that Foster does take seriously. In a 1991 review of Foster's book, MacDonald P. Jackson, an English professor at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, noted that, although Foster identified nine common words "that never deviate in the plays by more than a third from their respective mean frequencies," Foster chose to test only five of these basic function words on the *Funerall Elegye*. When Jackson calculated rates for the remaining four—"by," "in," "to," and "with"—the *Funerall Elegye* flunked them all. Jackson diplomatically raised the question of "a degree of unconscious bias in the selection and application of the tests."

Foster's ally Abrams attacked Jackson in the fall 1995 *Shakespeare Newsletter*. Abrams argued that the *Funerall Elegye*'s use of "by," "in," and "to" was not too high but rather continued an upward trend. "With" looks too low until you see it as extending a downward trend. To defend himself, Jackson countered that Shakespeare's poems alone were too scant a sample to justify Abrams's suggestion of trends, which data from the plays did not support.

Asked about the exchange today, Abrams is apologetic. "I feel bad about not letting Mac off the hook," he says. Disinclined to renew the battle, Abrams suggests the elegy's case can withstand the four prepositions' negative testimony. "Don should have included those [in *Elegy by W. S.*] and given the dismal news," Abrams says. But Foster is not ready to concede that the prepositions work against him. A few days after I ask about them, Foster hands me three pages of recalculated stats. They resurrect Abrams's hypothesis of prepositional trends. For his part, Jackson is planning "a comprehensive statistical analysis" of thirty or so function words in the *Funerall Elegye*, Shakespeare, and other writers.

As attribution problems go, W.S.'s *Funerall Elegye* is a tough case. To appreciate how tough, consider the field's one great success: Mosteller and Wallace's 1964 attribution of unsigned *Federalist Papers*. There were only two candidates for authorship (Madison and Hamilton), and long samples were available for comparison that matched the disputed texts in genre (political essay) and date (1787–1788). By contrast, any number of people might be W.S., and Shakespeare never wrote a signed funeral elegy. The texts from the right time period, 1612–1613, are the wrong genre completely: collaborative drama. It should be no surprise, then, that although Foster is itching to leave the elegy behind him by writing about it one last time—"I will be declaring victory and getting out"—W.S.'s case is not yet closed.

7

The Unabomber's case, on the other hand, is closed. Early on a Monday evening in April, Foster gives a lecture

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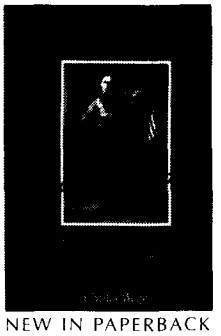
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for Vassar students in Lathrop House, where he and his family are in residence. The title: "Publish [Me] or Perish! The Works of Theodore Kaczynski." Before the talk, Foster confides that he flirted with the idea of delivering it in a hooded sweatshirt and goggly sunglasses, as in the sketch released by the FBI when the Unabomber was still at large.

About twenty-five students and half a dozen faculty members show up for cider, cookies, and Kaczynski. Foster tells them how in December 1996 Kaczynski's defense team asked Foster if he would help discredit the FBI's textual analysis of the Unabomber manifesto—the basis for the search warrant that let the government into Kaczynski's Montana cabin. On the World Wide Web, Foster found both the Unabomber manifesto and a 1971 Kaczynski essay given to the FBI by Kaczynski's brother, David. After comparing the two documents, he declined the defense's offer and testified instead for the prosecution. Using the Internet and on-line databases as enormous, contemporaneous samples of non-Kaczynski prose, Foster showed that Kaczynski and the Unabomber shared distinctive vocabulary, rare collocations of common words, echoes of the same source materials, irregular hyphenations and spellings, and a preference for the "corrected" cliché: "You can't eat your cake and have it, too." Soon requests for Foster's forensic skills came pouring in.

Though he doesn't mention it at his lecture, the work brings Foster up to $250 an hour. He's now advising in about half a dozen major cases, including those involving the Olympic Park bombing and JonBenét Ramsey. But no amount of money would tempt him to leave academia, he says. And when it comes to his budding courtroom career, that may be just as well. Without his academic position, Foster might not have the same entrée to the courtroom. As a category of evidence, forensic linguistics does not enjoy the legal cachet of fingerprints and eyewitness testimony. For each case, in a procedure known as a Frye hearing, Foster must show he is a recognized expert in a recognized field of scholarship.

How legitimate a field is forensic linguistics? How reliable is its evidence? In Foster's opinion, "forensic linguistics is about where DNA evidence was a few years ago." That may overstate the case.

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FOSTER IS THE ONLY FORENSIC LINGUIST ON THE FBI'S REFERRAL LIST.

Foster's is the only name on the FBI's referral list for authorship queries. The FBI's James Fitzgerald can't think of anyone, besides himself and Foster, who does criminal attribution. Bethany K. Dumas, editor of the on-line journal *Language in the Judicial Process,* explains that some subfields of forensic linguistics (such as structural linguistics, which can determine whether the structure of a sentence in a contract is ambiguous) may have reached a legal standard of proof but authorship is not one of them. "It's a discovery tool," Dumas says. In Kaczynski's case, she points out, Foster's testimony supported a claim of probable cause for a search warrant; it didn't convict.

Bruce Fraser, a linguist at Boston University, agrees. Attribution study can "make a good case," he says. "I don't know if it can ever be beyond a reasonable doubt." Foster knows that the academy and the courtroom decide about truth differently, but he doesn't dwell on it. "One doesn't want to be wrong," he concedes, with an uncharacteristically impersonal pronoun, "especially in capital cases."

Tonight at Vassar, however, Foster speaks with an authority that sweeps through both worlds—academic and criminal. "All felons, poets, and other liars, when they speak or write, have a certain degree of slippage between what they intend and what they write," Foster tells his audience. The challenge, Foster says, is to teach the FBI how to read deconstructively.

"One hesitates to say literary texts create felons," Foster says, but he goes on to describe Kaczynski as a man who loved literature and, like many lonely people, saw it as a kind of haven. Kaczynski believed that his parents, by pushing him into math, deprived him of creative expression. As early as 1967, he aspired to write fiction. He admired Somerset Maugham and Joseph Conrad so intensely that traces of their styles helped Foster tag him as the Unabomber. Kaczynski, Foster says, was a thwarted writer who killed to win readers for his message—namely, that technology was ruining our culture.

It's poetic justice that Kaczynski's most attentive reader helped convict him. Foster may have also brought about Kaczynski's worst nightmare: If literature is a sacred haven, then Foster has invited the serpent of number-crunching technology inside to sample its choicest fruit—to chew through Shakespeare's words as if they were so many numbers.

Caleb Crain's essay on Charles Brockden Brown will appear in *A Center of Wonder: The Body in Early America* (Cornell, forthcoming). His article "Pleasure Principles: Queer Theorists and Gay Journalists Wrestle Over the Politics of Sex" was published in the October 1997 *LF*.

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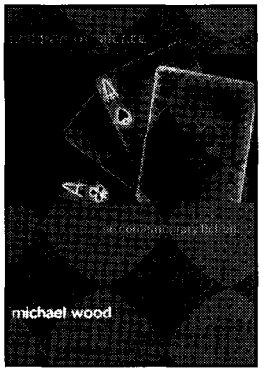

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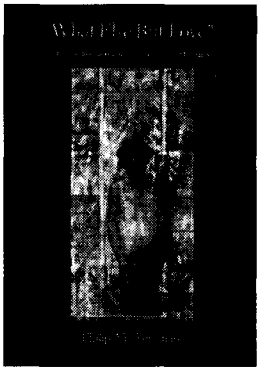

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INVISIBLE

BY **ALEXANDER STILLE**

A NEW GENERATION IS SHAKING UP THE ARCHITECTURE PROFESSION WITH GRANDIOSE DIGITAL DESIGNS. BUT HOW MANY OF THE CYBERARCHITECTS' BUILDINGS WILL EVER BE BUILT?

AT A RECENT ARCHITECTURE CONFERence in Buenos Aires, Greg Lynn, one of the profession's rising stars, made a statement that shocked many in the audience: "It is always more interesting to begin with an inventory of what machines want to do to us before we start asking what we desire from the machines."

A heated exchange followed between Lynn and his mentor and former employer, Peter Eisenman—considered the unofficial dean of the architectural avant-garde. "The day the look of my buildings is determined by the computer is the day I leave architecture," Eisenman said. Then perhaps it was time for the master to quit. Lynn, a professor of architecture at both Columbia and UCLA, responded cuttingly. "You can tell from looking at their buildings that Peter is using Form-Z and that Frank Gehry is using CATIA," he explains. "Each software has a very particular way of making shapes. You can tell a curve in Form-Z from a curve in Alias, the program we use. I said: 'If it comes down to it, I would have to give the software 51 percent of the credit for the design of my buildings.'"

Between architecture's grand old men like Eisenman and its Young Turks like Lynn lies a technological sea change. Today, for the first time, architects are designing wild curves and complex non-Euclidean shapes that would have been virtually inconceivable without animation software. Some young architects are using the computer to mimic dynamic forces, such as tornadoes and traffic flow. Others are producing designs that they describe as mutable or interactive—buildings with liquid-crystal skins that function like giant computer screens for broadcasting art, news, or advertisements. The majority of these projects are emerging from the country's top architecture schools, where devotees of cyberdesign enjoy substantial university discounts on otherwise unaffordable computer hardware.

For its proponents, the new cyberarchitecture represents nothing less than a social and spatial revolution, an opportunity to liberate us from the constricting—even oppressive—buildings of the past and propel us into a future in which ordinary people control their experience of the world around them. "For the most part, architecture has been a prison, because it defines our subjectivity," explains Stephen Perrella, an architect who edits the newsletter at Columbia's architecture school. "The house domesticates the subject, imprisoning it with traditional values. It sets up hierarchies, just as the kitchen has traditionally assigned a domestic role to women." According to Perrella, conventional architecture is unfortunate because it invites us to see ourselves in rigid, reductive ways.

In rhetoric borrowed from French poststructuralist theory, radical architects extol the computer as a destabilizing force that will break down concepts that have defined Western architecture for centuries: form and function, inside and outside, surface and structure, and, perhaps most crucially of all, the role of the architect-author as "master-builder." Announcing their originality with bold neologisms— "animate form," "liquid architecture," "hypersurface architecture"—and in densely argued, theoretical manifestos, cyberarchitects have made academe the laboratory of their field's future.

A rhetorical offensive is clearly under way. But whether the computer designs and political aspirations lauded in Columbia and UCLA classrooms are good for the profession is hotly contested.

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CITIES

As a practical matter, can architecture, a conservative art anchored in the stubborn realities of a physical site—walls, roofs, corporate clients, and a fixed budget—be rendered liquid or animate? The computer may allow the architect to turn complex algorithms and poststructuralist ideas into swirling parabolas on the computer screen, but will all this intellectual labor make any difference in the built world? After all, though theoretical essays can win an architect prestige among his peers, eminence in the field generally remains a matter of accumulating lucrative contracts with important clients, from Disney to the Museum of Modern Art. How can the young radicals overturn the controlling hierarchies of Western metaphysics and wage their protests against late-capitalist culture while competing for building projects and tenured teaching posts?

"I JOKINGLY refer to this as the 'toilet problem,'" says Roger Sherman who teaches architecture at both UCLA and the Southern California Institute of Architecture and has an active practice in Los Angeles: "In the course of every project, there is a moment when a workman, who may not even have a high school education, comes and tells you that there is a pipe in the way and asks whether he should move the toilet over or not. Architecture is very physical. I think that for a lot of the people involved in poststructuralist theory, the more building becomes about actual construction the less it is about architecture."

It is true that most of the new cyberarchitects are busier erecting theories than buildings. "It takes a great deal of strength to resist the temptation to build," says Perrella. "I'm a licensed architect, but I decided to take ten years to think about this culture, to build a discourse." Instead of making buildings, Perrella has devoted his energies to designing on the computer, reading French theory and philosophy, and writing: He has just finished editing *Hypersurface Architecture* (Academy Editions), a collection of theoretical essays.

In fact, the idea of the architect as someone who thinks and writes about architecture but doesn't actually build anything is not a product of the computer age. There is a long tradition of architects' designing paper projects that went unrealized—from the ideal cities of the Renaissance architect Filarete to the fantastic spherical monuments of the Enlightenment architect Étienne-Louis Boullée—but it's only recently that the idea of not building became an ideological credo. In this regard, many of today's cyberarchitects have been heavily influenced by Peter Eisenman, who has always emphasized the importance of theory over building. For Eisenman's disciples, the story of his very public love affair with theory has served as both an inspirational and a cautionary tale.

"I NEVER thought I would need to build," Eisenman told *The Wall Street Journal* in 1989. "I thought it would be enough to know about architecture." During the first twenty-five years of his career, he built little more than a handful of private houses while becoming known for his theoretical writings in architectural journals. Eisenman's first major public commission in this country—Columbus, Ohio's Wexner Center for the Visual Arts—was not completed until he was fifty-seven. It was considered such an event that *Progressive Architecture*, the field's preeminent journal, put the building on its cover with the headline: "Eisenman Builds."

In the 1960s, Eisenman had been anointed one of the New York Five, together with his well-known contemporaries Richard Meier, Charles Gwathmey, Michael Graves, and John Hejduk. Unlike the others, however, Eisenman was already deep into theory. Under the influence of linguist Noam Chomsky's notions of "deep structure," Eisenman wrote about the architect's need to understand the underlying forms of architecture—such as the ubiquitous L-shape. By the 1980s, Eisenman had left the universalist certainties of Chomsky and modernism for the self-undermining locutions of Jacques Derrida and deconstruction. In many ways, the Wexner Center is the apotheosis of Eisenman's effort to introduce Derridean "undecidability" into his architectural

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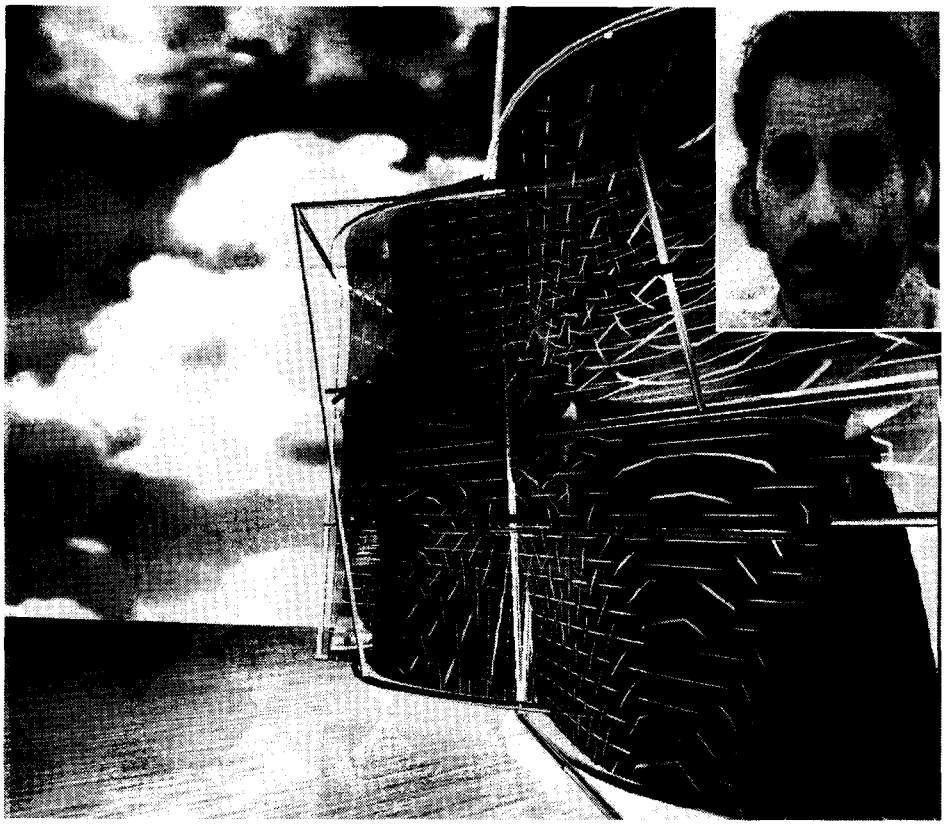

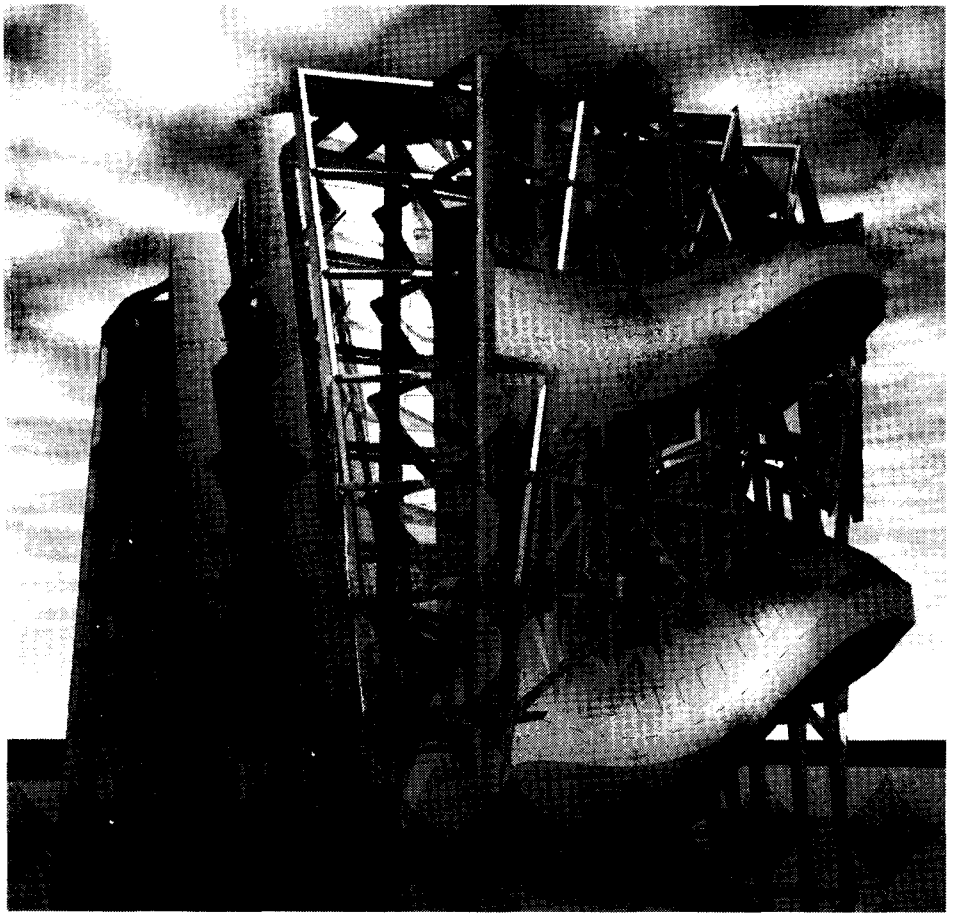

STEPHEN PERRELLA AND HYPERSURFACE ARCHITECTURE (ABOVE); LIQUID ARCHITECTURE PROJECT BY MARCOS NOVAK (BELOW)

practice: For example, columns descending from the ceiling fail to touch the floor. Clearly, they cannot provide structural support. But then why are they there? As bizarre decorative touches? Form or function? Eisenman makes it impossible to decide. The building was widely praised. It may be "the first major example in the United States of deconstructionist thinking," gushed *The New York Times.*

As it turned out, however, the romance between Derrida and architecture proved short lived and unhappy. In 1985, when Bernard Tschumi, dean of the Columbia architecture school, invited Eisenman and Derrida to collaborate with him on a project at Parc de la Villette in Paris, the results were less than successful. Eisenman and Derrida were supposed to co-design a garden, but once their plans were set, the Paris city government refused them funding. So, they produced a book called *Chora L Works* (Monacelli, 1997) instead; an emblem of the sterility of the collaboration, its pages are perforated with a grid of large holes so as to make the text literally unreadable.

Summing up the history of that failed relationship in a recent essay, Michael Speaks, an adjunct professor of architecture at Columbia, observes: "In the period between 1988 and 1994, there was a growing and palpable disappointment with deconstruction, some of which was directed towards Derrida himself." The problem, Speaks concludes, was that Derrida "did not offer the architects a clear way to convert deconstruction (as the theoretical protocol) into architectural form."

MEANWHILE, as Eisenman and his numerous acolytes in New York combed the canon of French theory for new sources of inspiration, on the opposite coast an architect of undisputed stature was quietly using the software created by the French aerospace manufacturer Dassault Systèmes to demonstrate how titanium steel could be manipulated to resemble ocean waves. Last year, this architect's latest project, the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, opened to universal cries of exaltation. Many critics hailed the building as Frank Gehry's—and the decade's—best work. More important, the building could not have been executed without the computer.

COURTESY STEPHEN PERRELLA AND MARCOS NOVAK

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In the past, Gehry's career suffered from his reputation as a brilliant dreamer, someone more artist than architect, whose buildings either could not be built or would simply take too much time and money to make. For several years, his commission to build the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles had been held up because of widespread skepticism about its feasibility. "What Bilbao proved was that he could build a complex building and build it on time and on budget," says Perrella. "He will now get a chance to do the Los Angeles concert hall." What's changed is not Gehry's vision so much as the technology necessary to reproduce it.

Although he begins by designing a cardboard model with his hands, Gehry specializes in complex, malleable shapes that are not readily reducible to Euclidean geometries. Eventually, the handcrafted model is scanned into a computer and rebuilt on a much larger scale. Thanks to the high-powered software, Gehry's firm can resolve structural problems on the computer before tackling them at the construction site. "Frank is definitely an 'auteur,' an architect as master-builder," says Sylvia Lavin, chair of the UCLA department of architecture and urban design, where Gehry teaches part time. "But his mastery has been fundamentally transformed by the process he has adopted."

Thus, from Eisenman the cyberarchitects inherited a passion for theory, and from Gehry proof that the computer could indeed produce architecture of a sort no one had seen before. But after the debacle with Derrida, they lacked an intellectual framework that would tie high theory and computers together.

THE LATE French philosopher Gilles Deleuze seemed to provide the answer. "Deleuze talks about the production of space and power relations, and all that appeals very much to architects," says Lynn. According to Lynn, the Deleuze boom started in 1987, with the translation into English of *A Thousand Plateaus*. Thanks to his singular combination of disdain and reverence for techno-capitalism, Deleuze had an immediate and obvious appeal to today's cyberarchitects. A member of the radical French left, Deleuze viewed the triumph of capitalism as inevitable. In his

BIT MAP

Computer programs may never replace the architect's traditional toolbox of blue pencils, modeling clay, and T-squares, yet software proficiency is becoming a requirement for today's job market as architecture firms increasingly go digital. Of course, not every school is equally enthusiastic about the new dispensation. To see how architecture schools are contending with the new technology, *Lingua Franca* made an informal survey of five of the country's top programs.

COLUMBIA Four years ago, under the direction of young professors Hani Rashid and Greg Lynn, Columbia inaugurated the "paperless studio." This provocative (though misleading) title was intended to announce Columbia's commitment to a future of computer-dominated design. In fact, in the paperless studios of instructors like Lynn and Steven Holl, there's no moratorium on traditional tools or wood-based products. But for Rashid, at least, paper is already a thing of the past. "Communication and information technologies have replaced stone, glass, and steel," trumpets Rashid, who believes that students reared in a media-rich culture should be encouraged to "republish" the materials already at their disposal instead of being limited to conventional drawing methods. In his class, students cut, splice, and morph sound and visual media and then project three-dimensional holograph-like images into interactive, multimedia spaces.

HARVARD Harvard's top-rated Graduate School of Design has been fickle in its approach to computers. In the mid-1980s, it was the home of Bill Mitchell, the guru of Computer-Aided Design (CAD). With the help of a supportive dean, Mitchell set up the network infrastructure that now provides a computer hookup for each student in every classroom. But cyberenthusiasm waned dramatically after Mitchell defected to MIT in 1992, leaving professors like Malcolm McCullough free to declare architecture "inherently low tech." Harvard's more technology-oriented administrators are determined to rebound. Last year, the school unveiled a brand-new Digital Design & Information Research Unit, which will try to distinguish cutting-edge technologies from the already passé.

MIT At his new home, Bill Mitchell has spearheaded an ambitious five-year plan to keep MIT's School of Architecture and Planning on the same cutting edge as its more famous colleague, MIT's Media Lab. Never known for fostering aesthetic creativity, MIT's architecture program is attempting a new tack. The school now conducts remote studio collaborations with teams in Europe, Japan, and Australia and enjoys generous grants from major computer and software manufacturers like Sun Microsystems and Microsoft.

PRINCETON "Computing is not in and of itself an architectural design topic," says Ralph Lerner, dean of the Princeton School of Architecture. "We haven't yet identified computing as a pure area of knowledge in architecture." Historically cautious, the school's attitude toward computers is changing. Student interest is strong, and all students use CAD in their design work. And despite the school's concern for strict disciplinary boundaries, Princeton counts cyberusers like Judith Barry and Peter Eisenman among its visiting faculty.

YALE Yale has been offering CAD courses since 1967, alongside classes taught by the likes of Charles Moore and Robert Venturi, yet it was only last year that CAD became a core requirement. With only forty-five computers for 150 students, the school risks falling off the technological bandwagon. Next year, however, the school plans to rewire its studios under the guidance of visiting professor Robert Frew. But with the search for a new dean reportedly mired in political infighting, one forlorn student wonders, "Who'll be steering the ship?"

ELEANA KIM

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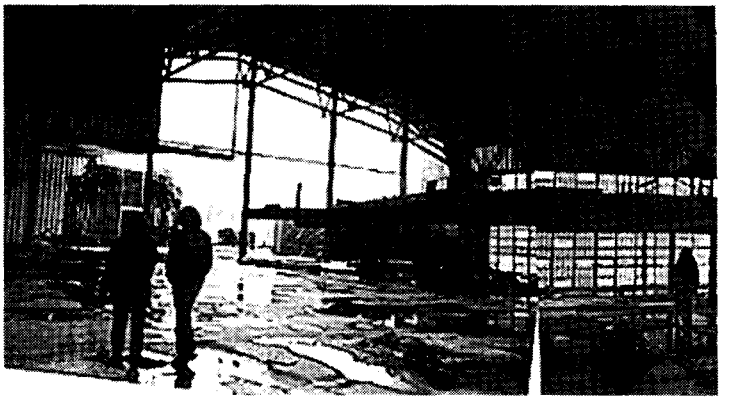
writing, he is in turn horrified by and admiring of capitalism's raw power and extraordinary fecundity in transforming the world. But capitalism's strength, according to Deleuze, is also its weakness. As it moves toward global dominance, capitalism's inherent instability becomes increasingly susceptible to manipulation. Rather than preaching outright revolution, Deleuze proposes a "micropolitics": the establishment of local zones of freedom that tap the energies of capitalism to create a "war machine" against the "state apparatus."

From a practical point of view, Deleuze offers architects a way to have their cake and eat it too. "The fact that Deleuze tries to launch a political project from within an institution appeals to architects who have to work with clients who have money to build," says Lynn. They can accept plum commissions while feeling that they are subverting capitalist culture by placing a doorway at an odd angle or using a curved surface rather than a grid. To the cyberarchitects, the extreme flexibility of the computerized manufacturing process enables the literal fulfillment of Deleuze's call for a world of "differentiation" and "multiplicities" against "repetition" or standardized form.

Greg Lynn is one of the more outspoken Deleuzians in the architecture world. Unlike most of his peers, he has also had an opportunity to test his theoretical musings in the real world. His working methods, he insists, are highly unorthodox. For example, he might begin the design process by feeding his computer a series of numbers that relate to a proposed site—average wind speeds coming in from the ocean or the flow of traffic from a nearby highway. Then he watches the computer translate these numbers into a series of algorithmic curves. Using animation software, Lynn allows the curves to unfold themselves and interact in order to suggest a possible design for the building; when they take on an interesting configuration, he freezes the computer frame. This process reflects an almost cabalistic faith in the power of numbers. The computer's ability to generate unexpected shapes introduces an element of randomness into the architect's conscious aesthetic choices. "The architect is not so much a form giver as a form director," Lynn says.

He compares the use of the computer to having a pet animal in the house. "Just as a pet introduces an element of wildness to our domestic habits that must be controlled and disciplined, the computer brings both a degree of discipline and unanticipated behavior to the design process," he writes. But where Lynn sees his mathematical efforts as creative innovation, his critics see undistinguished results or—worse—an architecture that is far more interesting to design than it is to look at or live in. "Greg talks about forces, about complexity theory, about wind and tornadoes," says UCLA's Roger Sherman. "But if you see the buildings, they look pretty static. The critical question to me is one of legibility. If you are in a building, are you going to understand that its design has something to do with the weather? I don't think so. Do you need to read the book before you can understand the building? These people are too smart. They are so smart that the world as it is is not interesting enough."



LYNN'S most ambitious project to date, a Korean Presbyterian church, illustrates his working method as well as the difficulties of applying Deleuzian notions to building in the real world. The congregation—three thousand Korean Americans—asked Lynn and his partners to convert an old Art Deco factory in Queens into a massive church for only $10 million. Lynn decided to erect a new building right on top of the old. Accordingly, he took the measurements of the existing factory and plugged them into his computer along with projected measurements for the church he planned to build on top of it. In this way, he was able to generate a series of visual ideas from the mathematical relationships between new and old structures. "You are not sure if you are in the new or old part. That kind of fusion is very Deleuzian," Lynn says. "We used the old as a kind of chrysalis, to create an alien structure out of an existing logic."

Even as the project moved into active construction, the design continued to evolve dramatically. In the past, Lynn explains, architects tended to start with a dominant visual motif—the spiral in Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum, for example—and make it the organizing principle for the whole building. "One of the big assets of the computer," he says, "is that you don't have to make a decision about the form in the first stage. We found with the Korean church we were still changing the design during the construction because of input from the contractors. The architect's role is to put these decisions together, to connect them, and let the form result from that process."

But Lynn readily admits that his dynamic, collaborative—he would say Deleuzian—approach to building has limitations. Originally, for example, he wanted to avoid the traditional church form: the Latin cross. A legacy of the Renaissance belief that a building has an ideal set of proportions modeled on the human body, the Latin-cross church is a recognizably anthropomorphic structure. The altar is the head of the body, the side aisles are the arms, and the congregation's seating area resembles a human torso. Not only does this shape lock the architect into a set of rigid rules, Lynn argues, but it is fundamentally oppressive: The "head" at the altar turns the congregation into a passive, obedient body subjugated to its priestly leadership. By contrast, if we think of the body as "a mobile, multiple, mutable form," rather than a static whole, Lynn believes we can avoid the "reduction to ideal types (circles, spheres, cubes)" that the conventional image of the body implies.

But substituting a "mobile, multiple, mutable" body for the static Latin cross proved harder than Lynn had anticipated. The congregation demanded a center aisle, which in turn affected other design choices. In addition, the group's reverend insisted

COURTESY GREG LYNN

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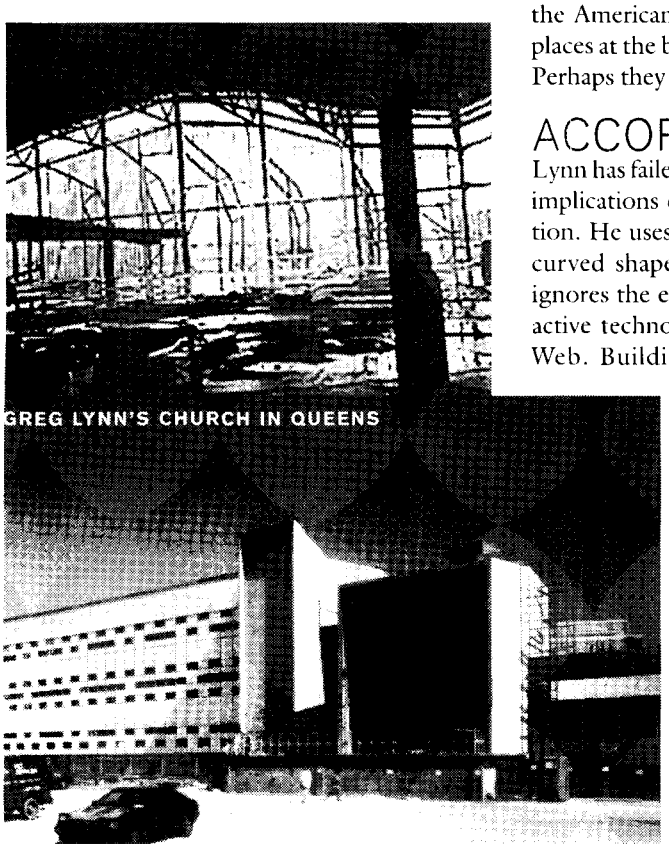
TO LYNN'S CHAGRIN, THE CONGREGATION DEMANDED A CENTER AISLE AND A PROMINENTLY PLACED ALTAR.



GREG LYNN'S CHURCH IN QUEENS

on a prominent altar. When Lynn began plugging his client's requirements into his Alias software, the program, like a kind of Ouija board, kept placing the altar in the front and center of the church. "A lot of hierarchical humanist elements crept into the Queens project," Lynn admits. "We tried putting the altar in the middle of the room or over on one side, but with all of the functional constraints and all of the dogma and ritual, it wanted to gravitate toward one end, on center." He says ruefully: "It's difficult to design a church that doesn't end up resembling a body."

Lynn's built projects have made him vulnerable to criticism from other cyberarchitects. The problem, argues Columbia's Hani Rashid, lies in the architect's uncritical reverence for technology. "Greg is kind of at the mercy of what the software tells him to do," he says. "Alias consulted with Reebok to help the company produce new shapes in running shoes. Now it's in the hands of architects who are producing buildings that look like running shoes." In a recent essay, the theorist Michael Speaks takes Lynn to task for failing to make buildings that challenge the status quo. Lynn, he implies, has sold out: "It will only be a matter of time until Lynn and other members of the American avant-garde assume their places at the board room meeting tables. Perhaps they have already been seated."

ACCORDING to his critics, Lynn has failed to realize the truly radical implications of the information revolution. He uses the computer to generate curved shapes and grand rhetoric but ignores the explosive potential of interactive technology and the World Wide Web. Buildings shouldn't merely be designed differently with computers, they should be pulsing with information. Stephen Perrella envisions buildings with thin plastic skins of liquid crystal, like enormous computer screens. A version of this already exists in Las Vegas, where an entire street is enclosed in an enormous television screen with constantly changing imagery.

For some cyberarchitects, this embrace of consumer culture's busy aesthetic is a politically charged act. Perrella believes that a media-saturated culture like ours gives us the tools to free ourselves from constricting social forces. All we need to do is to recognize and embrace this fact. The Internet, he says, is a good example: "Something started by the military has become one of the most liberatory forces in history." He believes architecture can accomplish the same thing. "I am trying to build a virus to insert within the new membranes that capitalism will inhabit that elicits an unanticipated vitality, that

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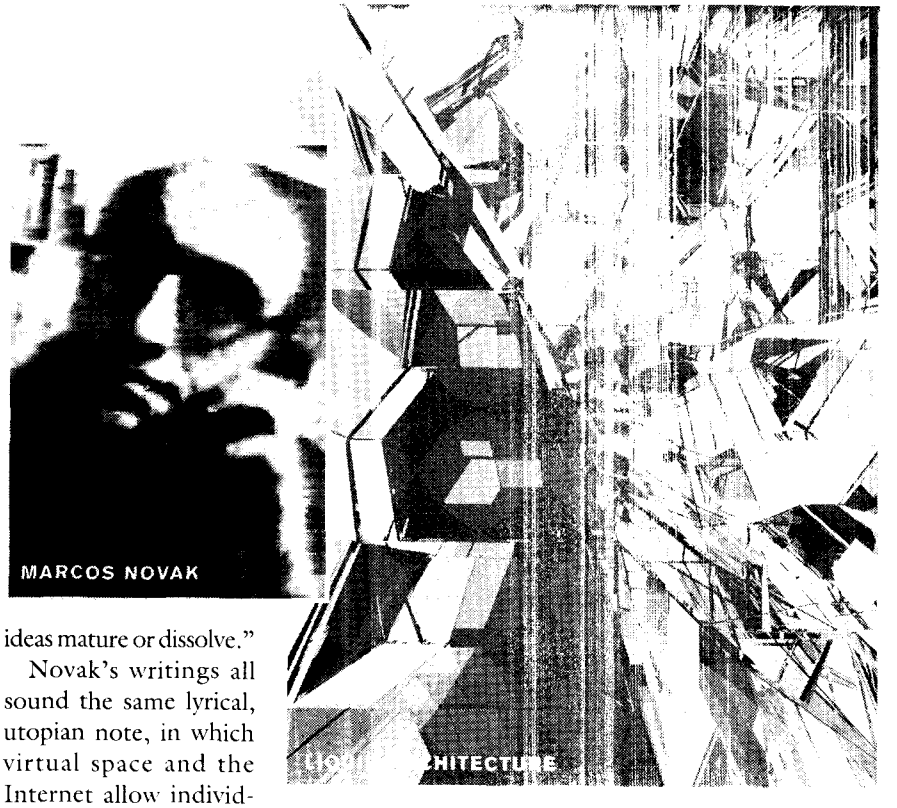
loosens up control," he says—with a few Deleuzian flourishes. "TV screens are getting bigger and bigger, and the home is going to be more intertwined with electronic imagery. I'm trying to distend the television imagery into the wallpaper and drapery."

In the same vein, UCLA's Marcos Novak dreams of creating buildings that incorporate interactive technology. Combining virtual reality and "intelligent" computer sensors that respond to the wishes of a building's inhabitants, Novak envisions something he calls "liquid architecture." "What is liquid architecture?" he asks in a recent essay. "A liquid architecture is an architecture whose form is contingent on the interests of the beholder; it is an architecture that opens to welcome you and closes to defend you; it is an architecture without doors and hallways, where the next room is always where it needs to be and what it needs to be.... Liquid architecture makes liquid cities, cities that change at the shift of a value, where visitors with different backgrounds see different landmarks, where neighborhoods vary with ideas held in common, and evolve as the ideas mature or dissolve."



Novak's writings all sound the same lyrical, utopian note, in which virtual space and the Internet allow individuals to create their own communities along with other like-minded souls. It sounds great, but for now at least these projects exist only on Novak's computer screen. For the moment he remains more of a performance artist than an architect, creating virtual utopias on the Internet or in exhibitions.

Indeed, once you try to envision Perrella and Novak's notions as actual standing buildings, the task becomes decidedly more difficult—or banal. What would media-inspired architecture look like? "Well, when I visit my mother on Staten Island," Perrella says, "you see all these houses with satellite dishes. As anyone can tell, they look terrible just stuck there. But since they are part of our landscape, why not build houses with the satellite dish as part of the design?" One can also see how the utopian world of the Internet could resemble a corporate version of George Orwell's *1984*. The so-called intelligent buildings in existence have greatly expanded the potential for social control: Offices with magnetic-strip passes at every doorway have allowed companies to track the whereabouts of employees to an unprecedented degree.

"What they're talking about sounds an awful lot like Bill Gates and would look a lot like Las Vegas and Times Square," scoffs Greg Lynn. "I disagree that interactivity is inherently democratic and that anything stable is inherently fascistic."

EVEN AS the cyberarchitects debate the merits and demerits of taking their politics and ideas to corporate clients and the real world, another computer-based architectural project at UCLA is quietly proving that the computer can

COURTESY MARCOS NOVAK

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FOR THE MOMENT, NOVAK REMAINS MORE OF A PERFORMANCE ARTIST THAN AN ARCHITECT, CREATING VIRTUAL UTOPIAS ON THE INTERNET.

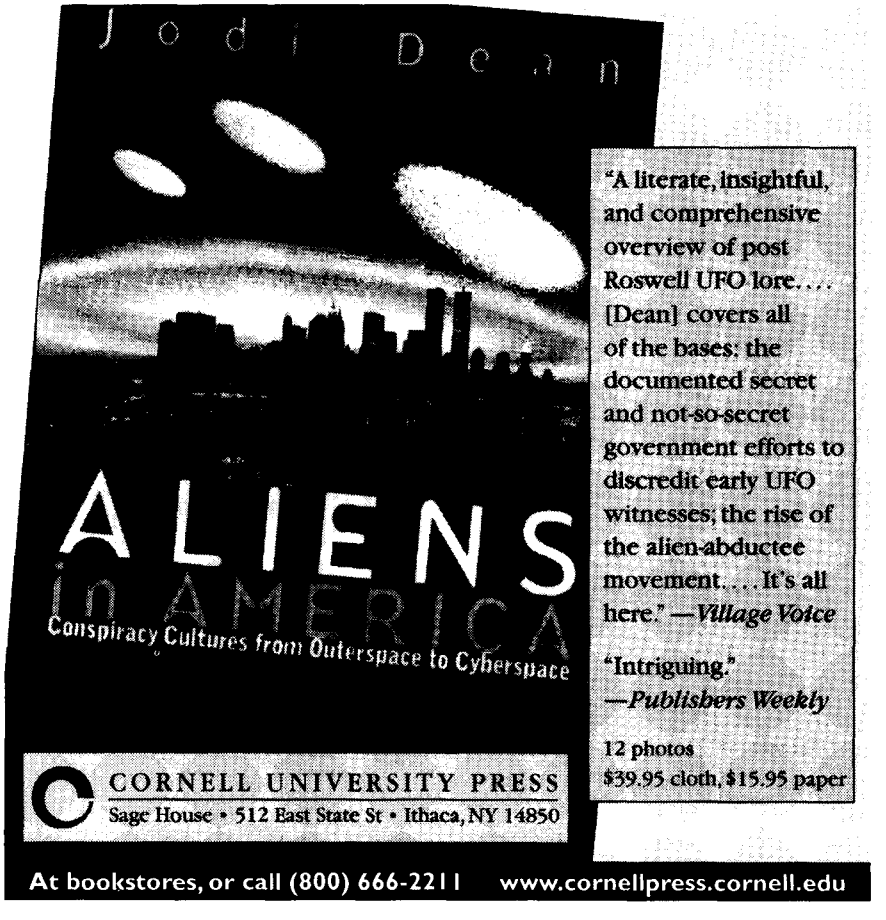
transform the practice and execution of architecture—without a high-theory gloss. This project, directed by Bill Jepson of UCLA's Urban Simulation Laboratory, is titled Virtual Los Angeles. Although it has none of the metaphysical pretensions of liquid architecture or animate form, the program may significantly affect the relationships among architect, client, and public. Jepson's long-term goal is to reproduce all four thousand square miles of greater Los Angeles in three-dimensional cyberspace so that developers, corporate clients, and community boards, as well as the ordinary citizen, can see the design impact of new construction before the ground is even broken.

Because it uses virtual reality technology rather than simple two-dimensional photography, Virtual Los Angeles allows for movement and shifting perspectives. Directing a mouse or joystick, Jepson steers a car through the Los Angeles streets depicted on his computer screen, as one might in a race-car game at a video arcade. But here the Silicon Graphics machine creates an experience of incomparably greater realism, capturing detail down to the graffiti on walls and cracks on the sidewalk. By flashing thirty images per second—the rate of a typical television broadcast—the program allows you to move through the cityscape in what feels like real time. In this way, if you look up as you turn west at a particular intersection, you might see the imposing skyline of downtown Los Angeles, and if you turn around you can see how the new facade of one building harmonizes with the other buildings on the block. Jepson has already digitized about six hundred blocks, or fifteen square miles, of the city.

Just as developers now have to perform an environmental-impact study before getting approval for a project, Jepson would like them to use Virtual Los Angeles to assess a proposed building's visual impact on the cityscape. Already, he says, developers and architects are coming to him on a private, voluntary basis. By plugging their specifications into his computer, they can get a glimpse of what their buildings will look like within the larger urban context. And the results don't always work out in favor of the developer or the architect.

So Richard Meier discovered while designing his much ballyhooed Getty Center in Los Angeles. At the behest of the Getty trustees, Meier volunteered to show his plans to Jepson's team in 1987. At the time, Jepson was not using full-fledged virtual reality technology but rather one of the most advanced softwares then available, which allowed him to print three-dimensional renderings of Meier's plans with near photographic quality. "We were working with Richard, and he really liked what we were doing," Jepson recalls. "He completely changed the art history building because we were able to show him that he was not getting the views and perspectives from the lobby that he wanted." But the relationship turned sour when the trustees began to question Meier's design for a staircase inside the center's main entrance. According to Jepson, the trustees asked to see what the staircase would look like on Jepson's computer and decided that the original design was not sufficiently "museum-like." Meier made alterations, and soon after stopped cooperating with Jepson's team. "I don't hold that against Richard," Jepson says now. "It was difficult for him to have this third party between him and his client. He needed to control the information that was flowing back to the trustees, and so we were removed from the process."

Thus Meier's experience with Virtual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BILL JEPSON AND HIS VIRTUAL LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles illustrates an important point: Virtual reality can facilitate a redistribution of power in the building process. In this case, the beneficiaries of Jepson's technology were the architect's clients. But ordinary citizens may also benefit. Jepson cites a recent case in which developers of an elaborate shopping mall, complete with residential towers and an IMAX theater, decided to sell a skeptical local neighborhood on the project's merits by holding a town meeting in Jepson's lab. But the virtual reality model only reinforced community opposition to the project. To their chagrin, the developers found themselves back at their drawing boards, trying to devise a more palatable version of their grand scheme.

Predictably perhaps, the radical cyberarchitects in academe regard Jepson's project with scorn, as part of a tradition of social engineering they find highly suspect. Says Perrella: "Even with the most humanistic of intentions, I can see this as an easily instrumentalizable technology"—one that can readily serve the interests of corporations or the government. The same complaint, however, could be made about Perrella's conception of "hypersurface" architecture. Earlier this year, the nonagenarian Philip Johnson, always quick to spot the latest trend, presented his latest proposal for two corporate towers in New York City's Times Square: sheathing the buildings in plastic or other synthetic material that would serve as a constantly mutating surface for advertising. Thus while Perrella sees hypersurface architecture as subversive, the kind of media-saturated building he dreams of could just as easily play into the hands of corporate forces as a splashy and effective means of extending their reach.

For all their talk of radical indeterminacy, Perrella and other cyberarchitects may be too quick to assume that a concrete form can directly express their political intentions. "You can't separate a building from its cultural and political context," argues Lynn. "The same building can change its meaning when the institution that occupies it changes. You can't solve political problems with new forms." Lynn may well be right, but just because buildings rarely succeed as political statements doesn't mean that architects themselves can't make various kinds of political decisions. "Designing space has always been a political act," reflects Columbia's Hani Rashid. "The dilemma for architects has always been a moral one, whether it's building a cathedral for a corrupt pope or a tower for AT&T."

Nonetheless, he says, potential projects must be considered on their individual merits. Rashid cites a current client: no less an icon of American capitalism than the New York Stock Exchange. Rashid's job is to create a virtual reality model of the entire market that will enable officials at the Exchange to simulate past fluctuations, including, for example, the events preceding last year's Hong Kong crash. "In this case," says Rashid, "we're producing the engine of the industry, not exporting its image or virtues to the public." In the end, a theorist like Deleuze offers little guidance to an architect making tough choices about old issues, including what kind of clients he is willing to work for, the cost of the buildings he wants to construct, and the uses to which those buildings will be put.

In the meantime, virtual building in cyberspace—where tough choices may be endlessly deferred—will continue to beckon. "I think there is a problem with imagining buildings where the technology is so extraordinarily expensive that it is out of sync with reality," says Roger Sherman. "That is why a lot of these people are content to remain in the virtual world. I'm not sure that much of this will be buildable. And a lot of it will end up going the way of visionary projects from the past. But even if any of these projects are built, I'm not sure anyone would be able to perceive them as being the fulfillment of true democratization."

Alexander Stille is the author of *Benevolence and Betrayal: Five Italian Jewish Families Under Fascism* (Penguin) and *Excellent Cadavers: The Mafia and the Death of the First Italian Republic* (Vintage).

COURTESY BILL JEPSON

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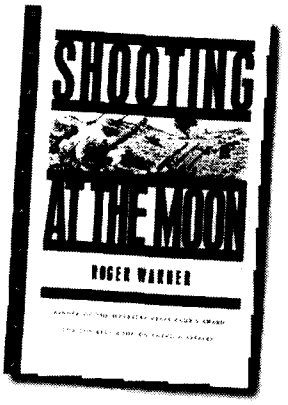

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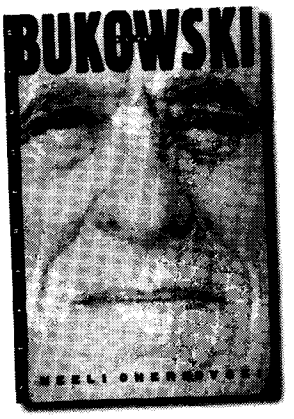

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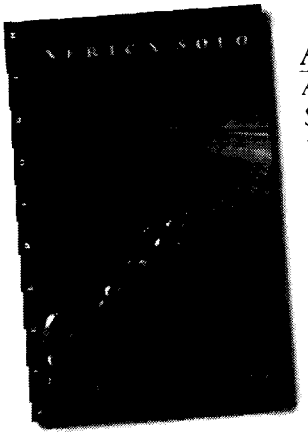

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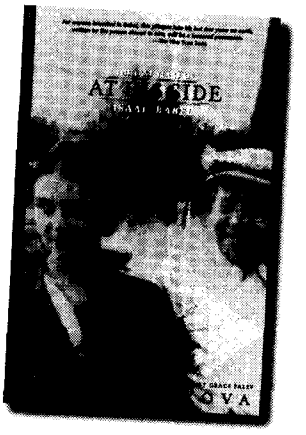

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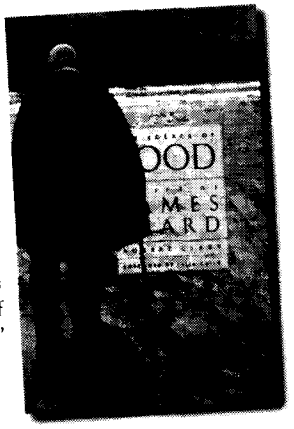

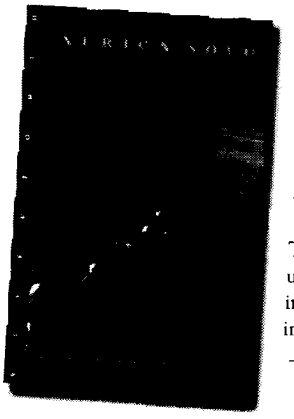

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PICTURES OF **US**

ARE NATIVE VIDEOMAKERS PUTTING ANTHROPOLOGISTS OUT OF BUSINESS?

BY **JOHN PALATTELLA**

IN THE SUMMER OF 1966, THE VISUAL anthropologists Sol Worth and John Adair endeavored to teach filmmaking to a small Navajo community in Pine Springs, Arizona. The two researchers were curious about how a Western medium would look "through Navajo eyes." Would Navajo conceptions of space and time shape a film's form or content? Or would the Navajo adopt more familiar film techniques? Aided by a translator, Adair explained the project to a Navajo elder named Sam Yazzie. Once the explanation was finished, the elder asked if making movies would do his community's sheep any harm. No, Worth answered happily. After some reflection, he asked if making movies would do the sheep any good. No, Worth admitted. "Then why make movies?" the elder wondered aloud.

Inspired in part by such skeptical questions, visual anthropologists have spent the last few decades turning ethnographic film into a more self-critical enterprise. Gone for good is the ethos of such classics as Robert Flaherty's 1922 film *Nanook of the North*. Celebrated for much of the century as a meticulous documentary of Inuit life on Hudson Bay, today the film is held up as an example of the limits of the "colonial gaze." (For instance, to emphasize the hero, Nanook's, primitiveness, Flaherty filmed him hunting with a harpoon, even though the Inuit had long hunted with rifles.) When today's visual anthropologists set out to make films, they are more likely to highlight the artifice of their activity—or even to focus primarily on themselves.

Meanwhile, anthropologists are trying to come to grips with an even more profound change. With inexpensive video equipment now available worldwide, some of it carted to remote corners of the globe by anthropologists, many of the indigenous people who were once examined by an ethnographer's camera are now looking at their own cultures through a viewfinder. From the Arctic tundra to the Amazon basin to the Australian outback, indigenous people are producing videos that are screened in local community centers, on regional and national television stations, and occasionally at international film and video festivals. And with the proliferation of indigenous media has come a whole new set of disciplinary anxieties. "We are witnessing a reversal of authority relations," says Rice University anthropologist George Marcus. "There is no longer a voice secondary to the anthropologist. Now, the anthropologist's voice supplements that of indigenous people."

Marcus's observation raises a number of questions that have provoked much soul searching—and vigorous debate—within the profession. What is the purpose of the visual anthropologist once her subjects take over the process of documenting their lives? Is it time for the field to start writing its obituary?

AMONG the foremost supporters of indigenous media is Faye Ginsburg, an anthropologist and the director of the Center for Media, Culture, and History at New York University. Ginsburg and many other anthropologists believe that video affords societies—especially oral ones—an invaluable opportunity to strengthen native languages and traditions threatened by exposure to Western culture. Indigenous video makers, Ginsburg surmises, "far from being 'polluted' by contact with other cultural forms, have taken on Western media technologies both as critics of the culturally destructive effects of mass media and as producers of their own work." Accessible and easily transportable, Ginsburg and others argue, video is an essential tool of cultural rehabilitation. And far from eliminating the anthropologist's role, they add, indigenous media open new avenues for analysis and interpretation. Perhaps most crucially, indigenous media demand that an anthropologist approach native cultural traditions without assuming they exist in a historical or technological vacuum.

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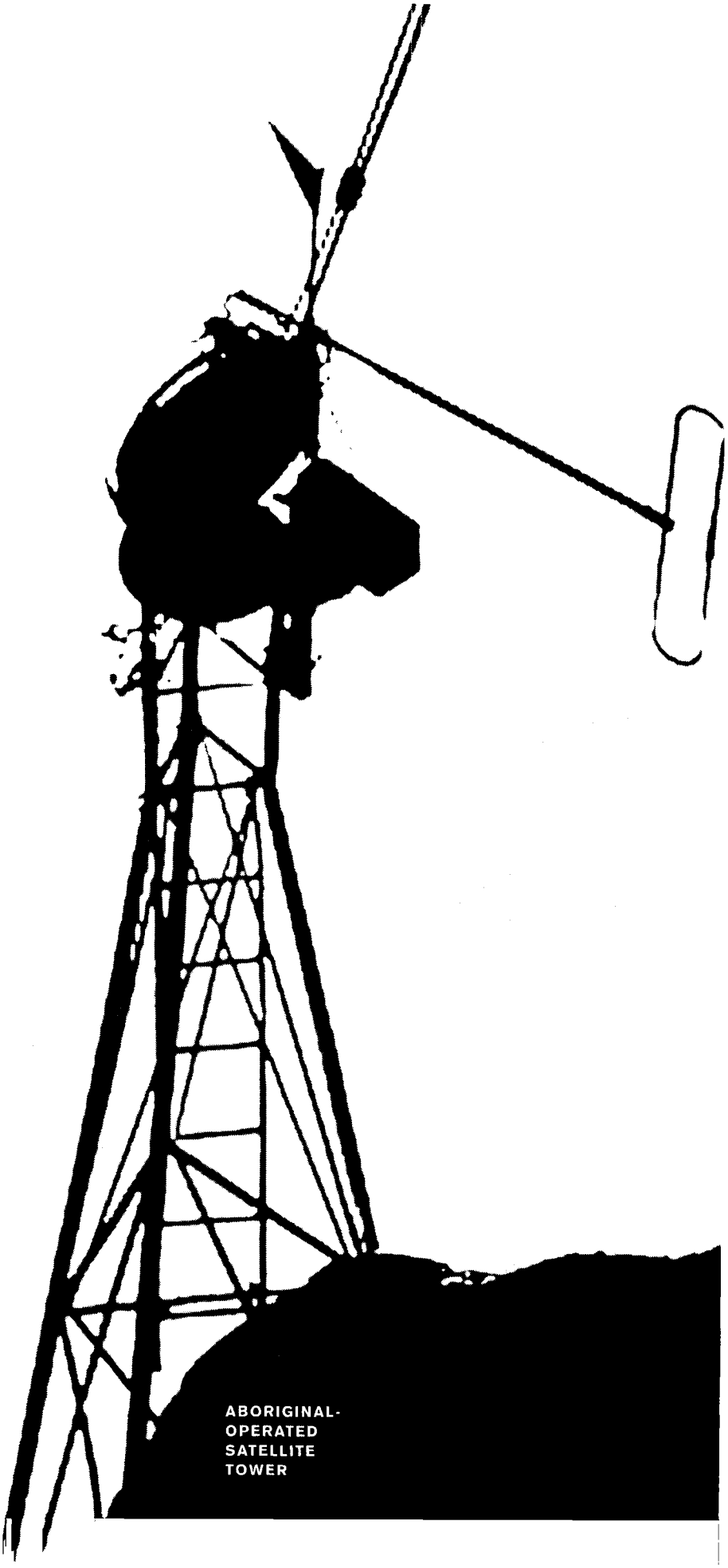
Nonsense, respond skeptical colleagues: Indigenous video makers are trapped in a Faustian bargain. The proliferation of TV, film, and video in indigenous communities has triggered the final assault of Western values on native languages and cultures. Video is less a means of liberation, these skeptics say, than a tool of cultural indoctrination—with a user-friendly face. The spread of video among indigenous people represents "a devaluation of the strange and the different" remarks James Weiner, an anthropologist at the University of Adelaide, in Australia. The offer of video cameras to native peoples represents not a renunciation of Western culture's authority but a new and particularly insidious extension of it.

FORWARD-thinking members of the profession saw the current tumult coming years ago. In 1975 the anthropologist and documentary filmmaker Jean Rouch, a renowned contemporary of Claude Lévi-Strauss, predicted the emergence of indigenous media—and with it the waning of anthropologists' authority over their subjects. The camera, he declared, "will pass automatically into the hands of those who were, up to now, always in front of it. Then the anthropologist will no longer monopolize the observation of things."

But even Rouch might have been surprised to see just how accurate his prediction was. Video has found its way into the hands of indigenous people all over the world, partly because it is easier to use and cheaper than film. In the United States, a high-quality one-hour tape costs anywhere between $6 and $15, while eleven minutes of 16 mm color negative stock can cost $150. Moreover, video footage does not need to be sent to a lab for processing, and tapes can be reused. Still, for some indigenous communities, buying video is a drain on already meager resources. Many anthropologists I spoke to volunteered stories of communities "devoting a cow to video"—selling milk and cheese, or some other locally produced staple, to purchase batteries and blank tapes.

In many cases, native video making has arisen as a response to the relentless spread of satellite television. If you can't beat Western technology, the logic goes, why not join it—and put it to use for your own ends? Take the case of Ernabella Video and Television (EVTV), one of



ABORIGINAL-OPERATED SATELLITE TOWER

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Australia's oldest Aboriginal-operated TV stations and one that anthropologists often single out for discussion. EVTV is in Ernabella, a small town in southern Australia that is home to roughly five hundred members of the Pitjantjatjarra tribe. In 1983 the residents learned from a government representative of the imminent launching of AUSSAT, Australia's first communications satellite. (At that time, Ernabella was without television or video; its residents had been exposed only to the 16 mm films that were periodically brought to town.) Wary of satellite-delivered Western television, which one Ernabella resident likened to "having hundreds of white fellas visit without permits every day," the community established a homegrown alternative: EVTV. A cowboy-techie named Rex Guthrie, along with other white advisers, was soon tutoring the Pitjantjatjarra in video production. And, thanks to a local electronics

FAYE GINSBURG

enthusiast who assembled a TV transmitter from secondhand parts, a television station started broadcasting to Ernabella and its environs in 1985. To augment its small public grants and its revenues from video sales, EVTV has supported itself through a ten-cent surcharge on all soft drinks sold at the Ernabella community store.

EVTV has produced about one hundred videos, and an Ernabella media committee, composed mostly of village elders, is responsible for guaranteeing that all of them portray Pitjantjatjarra culture. Some videos document the preparation of local bush foods and medicinal plants; others record traditional ceremonies like the Kungkarangkalpa, which is devoted to the origins of the Pleiades constellation. The media committee also monitors the content, broadcast, and sale of videos to ensure that traditional prohibitions of access to secret and sacred ceremonies are honored.

ON the other side of the globe, the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) offers another celebrated example of native filmmaking. But unlike EVTV, the IBC has received extensive government support—and has occasionally veered closer to the norms of Western-style entertainment. The Inuit live in hamlets dotting Canada's Northwest Territories and northern Quebec, where television first arrived in 1973. Soap operas, news broadcasts from Detroit, and countless ice hockey games suddenly filled the long Arctic nights. Outraged that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation made no provisions for tribal programming, Inuit groups lobbied the government to include them in future communications projects. In the late 1970s, the government awarded the Inuit a $2.8 million budget and provided them with access to video and television training facilities. After producing several video projects, the Inuit pressed the government to establish a pan-Arctic television station that would broadcast in the Inuit language of Inuktitut. In 1982, with its administrative offices in Ottawa and production centers in five Inuit communities, the nonprofit IBC went on the air.

Every week, the IBC broadcasts five hours of commercial-free programming to more than forty Arctic communities. *Qimaivvik*, which means "pass on knowledge," is one of half a dozen IBC shows. At first glance, it resembles a PBS nature documentary, but it is actually a how-to show about hunting seal, caribou, and polar bear. *Qaggiq*, which means "drum dance gathering," is a news program that covers local and national politics. During the 1980s, a big hit was *Super Shamou*, a melding of Saturday-morning children's TV and Inuit spirituality. A mild-mannered hero who sports a Superman-style cape and draws his shamanlike power from an amulet of caribou sinew and teeth, Super Shamou flies over the islands and inlets of the Arctic fighting for truth, justice, and the Inuit way. In one episode, he abruptly leaves a caribou hunt to save an Inuit boy dangling from a cliff. Super Shamou descends from the sky just in time to catch the falling boy and then proceeds to apprise him of the importance of safety and friendship.

Another popular children's show still on the air is *Takuginai*, which means "look here, look see." Loosely modeled on *Sesame Street*, *Takuginai* features Inuit-looking puppets who demonstrate the importance of respecting your elders and offer lessons in Inuktitut numbers and syllabics. Unlike *Sesame Street*, however, *Takuginai's* animals are not cute and cuddly; after all, the Inuit hunt seal and other animals for survival. Instead, *Takuginai* treats viewers to the adventures of scruffy, unappetizing creatures, including Tulu the Raven and Johnny the Lemming.

"IT'S OUTRAGEOUS TO THINK THAT JUST BECAUSE A KAYAPO USES A CAMCORDER HE BECOMES WESTERN," SAYS GINSBURG. "IF WE DRINK TEA, DOES THAT MEAN WE ARE CHINESE?"

IT is just this proliferation of TV and video from Australia to the Arctic that has James Weiner worried. Weiner caused a stir last year when he argued in *Current Anthropology* that camcorders cause indigenous people irreparable harm. Weiner claims that "Visual media have embedded within them their own Western ontology"—one characterized by realism, immediacy, and self-expression. Before anthropologists rush to celebrate the use of media by indigenous people, he argues, they should investigate whether visual images are "culturally salient forms of expression and communication in a given indigenous world. It could be, for example, that aural or auditory channels are more focal as modes of communal consciousness formation in some areas, such as the forest-dwelling Foi of Papua New Guinea." Without such investigation, Weiner cautions, anthropologists run the risk of ignoring video's power to impose an alien ontology onto indigenous people. The

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SUPER SHAMOU DRESSES UP LESSONS ABOUT INUIT LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THE STYLE OF SATURDAY-MORNING TELEVISION IN THE UNITED STATES.

medium is the message, he implies, and the message is cultural indoctrination.

As a result of video technology, Weiner writes, an "insidious" process takes place—namely "the replacement of genuine historical, linguistic, social, and cultural difference with an ersatz difference among electronic images." Gaining access to video, he suggests, costs indigenous people the very cultural identity they seek to record on tape. And the risk to the profession, he remarks, is equally grave: There is a real possibility that anthropologists "will now be spared the irksome task of learning difficult languages and the distasteful business of living in boring, out-of-the-way places." Supporters of indigenous media believe that when a Kayapo Indian from the Amazon basin shoots a video of a women's naming ceremony, complete with footage of dancing anteater and monkey masks, the result is a genuine product of Kayapo culture. From Weiner's perspective, however, the Kayapo might as well be playing video games at Epcot's Future World.

If Weiner is right, there's not much for anthropologists to do except condemn video as the grog of the global village. Weiner's essay in *Current Anthropology* was accompanied by the comments of several supporters. James Faris, a professor emeritus of anthropology at the University of Connecticut, likened the effect of video on indigenous people to that of "radioactive decay." Angela Piccini, a professor of geography at the University of Wales, Swansea, endorsed Weiner's claim "that to laud indigenous ethnographic film simply

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because it is indigenous is theoretically unsound and that, in fact, the continued attribution to ethnographic film of a certain 'truth value' over other genres of cultural expression suggests the sort of totalizing project anthropologists have been seeking to deconstruct for some time now."

This kind of thinking irks Faye Ginsburg, who believes that Weiner's argument, which takes several swipes at her research on indigenous media, amounts to little more than boilerplate technological determinism. "While it's true that since the fifteenth century no Western object that has entered cultural circulation has been neutral," Ginsburg says, "it's nonetheless outrageous of Weiner to think that just because a Kayapo uses a camcorder he becomes Western. If we drink tea, does that mean we are Chinese? Of course not, but the question is no more or less innocent than Weiner's question about video."

It's not that Ginsburg and Weiner disagree over the fact that Western media can dump alien, potentially hazardous values into an indigenous society. Ginsburg herself often stresses that many Aboriginal people regard TV as just another European invasion. As Freda Glynn, an Aboriginal activist, told her several years after AUSSAT had started flooding rural communities with Western-style television, "We have had grog, guns, and diseases, but we have been really fortunate that people outside the major [urban] communities have had no communication like radio or TV. Language and culture have been protected by neglect. Now, they are not going to be. They need protection because TV will be going into those communities twenty-four hours a day in a foreign language—English."

Nevertheless, unlike Weiner, Ginsburg believes that indigenous people can use Western media without adopting the conventions of Western culture. If one thinks of the Inuit children's programs *Super Shamou* and *Takuginai*, Weiner may be right. After all, to seize the attention of young Inuit viewers the programs dress up lessons about Inuit language and culture in the style of Saturday-morning television in the United States. But Weiner's claim that video is a Westernizing force becomes tenuous when tested against other examples.

TERENCE TURNER WITH A KAYOPO LEADER AT A 1993 DEMONSTRATION IN BRASILIA

CONSIDER the Brazilian fieldwork of Terence Turner, a University of Chicago anthropologist who has spent more than a decade studying the relationship between traditional Kayapo culture and Kayapo videotapes. Primarily an oral society, the Kayapo use video to document both ceremonial performances and transactions with representatives of the Brazilian government. The intention in the latter case is "to have the equivalent of a legally binding transcript of business contracts or political agreements," Turner explains. Video was first introduced to Kayapo villages by three Brazilian researchers in 1985. At that time, Turner notes, the Kayapo already owned several portable cassette decks, which they used to record ceremonial performances and to relay messages from one village to another. In the late 1980s, Turner himself, acting as a consultant for a British documentary about the Kayapo, gave the Kayapo two camcorders, batteries, numerous blank videotapes, and a VCR and monitor.

In a meticulous study of Kayapo video production published in 1992 in *Anthropology Today*, Turner discusses a video of a men's naming ceremony. He argues that the video representation of the ceremony—by which he means everything from the camera work and editing to the shot structure—conforms to the same principle of beauty apparent in the ceremony itself, one rooted in a complex pattern of repetition and sequential organization. The video aesthetically mirrors the ceremony. "Representation," Turner concludes, "far from being an exclusively Western project foisted on the Kayapo through the influence of Western media, is as Kayapo as manioc meat pie." The camcorder, Turner suggests, is not so at odds with Kayapo culture that it transforms any Kayapo who uses it into a

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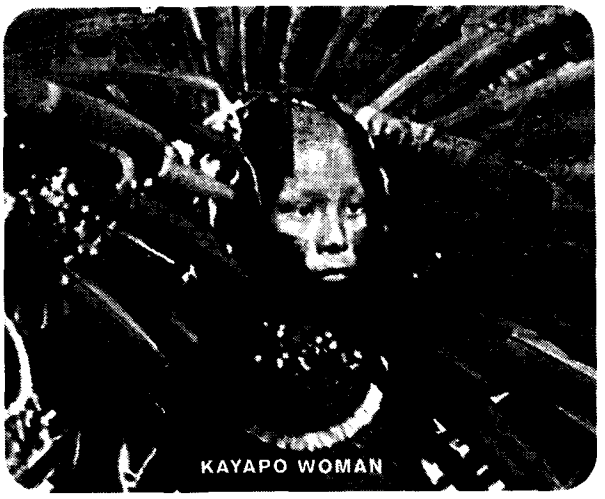
KAYAPO WOMAN

"REPRESENTATION," SAYS TURNER, "IS AS KAYAPO AS MANIOC MEAT PIE."

Westerner, or a *faux indigène*. In this case, the medium is not the message.

Ginsburg notes other instances of striking similarity between indigenous video production and more traditional forms of communication. In *Starting Fire with Gunpowder*, a 1991 Inuit-produced documentary about the origins of the IBC, for example, several Inuit discuss the impact of video and television on their communities. One man says the Inuit are excited about using television because it is "an oral form of communication," one "as old as it is new." From this perspective, the Inuit, though forced to learn spoken and written English by the Canadian government, have leapfrogged over print culture to a visual and electronic medium more closely allied with their oral traditions.

ULTIMATELY, Ginsburg argues, what's most distinctive about indigenous video is its preservation and promotion of indigenous cultural values. In essay after essay, she explains how indigenous people around the globe are using video to rejuvenate deracinated cultural traditions, something Weiner implies is impossible. "Because the assaults on indigenous people have been so severe," Ginsburg surmises, "these current efforts to reassert a cultural and historical presence through a widely accessible media form are particularly important." She adds that such "self-consciousness about cultural production suggests a close parallel to the project of anthropology, yet one whose urgency is far greater than any academic agenda."

One person whose work Ginsburg discusses in this context is Inuit video maker Zacharias Kunuk. Though produced for Inuit audiences, Kunuk's videos have appeared at international festivals and museums, including the Margaret Mead Film & Video Festival and the Museum of Modern Art. Kunuk first captured the attention of anthropologists in the late 1980s with a video trilogy that depicts the Inuits' seasonal travel and hunting patterns and emphasizes the self-sufficiency of their traditional ways of life. The trilogy is set in Igloolik, an island community in the upper Northwest Territories. The time is the 1930s and 1940s, shortly before the Canadian government mandated English-language schooling, effectively forcing the Inuit to abandon the Arctic wilderness for government settlements. One sees Kunuk's cast traveling by dogsled, living in igloos and sod houses, and wearing traditional clothing like sealskin parkas and watertight *kamiks*, or boots.

The trilogy conveys a sense of communal intimacy born of perseverance. Kunuk favors long shots that picture small groups of people laboring at a task within a vast landscape mottled blue, white, and gray. These shots are punctuated by tight close-ups of either two people talking to each other or one person talking to someone off-camera about the work at hand. The land and the slow rhythms of group life dominate Kunuk's frame.

Watching the trilogy, you wouldn't know that today the Inuit of Igloolik wear Levi's, live in clapboard houses, have telephones and fax machines, and traverse the tundra on snowmobiles. You wouldn't know that the town's teenagers can debate the merits of the latest Arnold Schwarzenegger film and think it's ridiculous that visitors still ask them, unfail-

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WATCHING THE TRILOGY, YOU WOULDN'T KNOW THAT THE INUIT WEAR LEVI'S, LIVE IN CLAPBOARD HOUSES, AND HAVE TELEPHONES AND FAX MACHINES.

ingly, if they live in igloos. Nor would you know that Igloolik and other Inuit communities are plagued by poverty, domestic violence, and drug and alcohol abuse, all of which are issues covered by IBC programs.

Given this striking incongruity, Ginsburg's interest in Kunuk's work seems odd. On the one hand, she maintains that Weiner's attack on indigenous media betrays a nostalgia for the idea of the noble savage. "Weiner's position is romantic in that he thinks there are societies that are completely timeless and Other," she says. ("I don't lament the passing of traditional cultures as hypostasized entities," Weiner retorts. "All traditions undergo transformation, disappearance, revival, and refiguration.") On the other hand, Ginsburg's essays on indigenous media invariably allude to videos like Kunuk's, which fastidiously—and lovingly—reconstruct a tradition-bound world. How can one counsel against nostalgia for unchanging native cultures and simultaneously praise backward-looking work like Kunuk's?

"Of course Kunuk casts a glance back at the Inuit past," Ginsburg admits. But, she says, this kind of work serves a critical social function: "It's a crucial act for oral cultures in a literate society to enter their history into a public record of sorts, to confirm that history's existence in the face of all that has tried to erase it. Video lets indigenous people do that." Besides, she continues, "to deny the Inuit the opportunity to recuperate important aspects of their cultural life is like saying that the destruction of Eastern European Jewish culture means that everything American Jewish culture has reconstructed in its wake is illegitimate."

STILL FROM KANUK'S TRILOGY

IN a sense, what Ginsburg and Turner value about the work of indigenous video makers is its anthropological sensibility—its understanding that a web of customs, rituals, values, and institutions constitutes a particular culture. But if indigenous media are anthropology with a different face, where does that leave the Western anthropologist? Evidently, with a diminished but nonetheless indispensable role. Jay Ruby, a visual anthropologist at Temple University, acknowledges that in certain respects indigenous media have made ethnographic film irrelevant. Nevertheless, he insists, "indigenous media and anthropology are entirely different things. What a native produces still has to be analyzed by an anthropologist to be understood by our culture. Translation still needs to take place. Anthropologists are still cultural brokers." For Ruby, as for Ginsburg, genuine differences between cultures persist, even though those differences circulate through similar media channels.

Rice University's George Marcus agrees: "The modest answer to the question about the end of anthropology that one hears these days is: Well, what would the study of indigenous people be without studying their use of media? It's part of their culture." The rise of indige-

ZACHARIAS KUNUK/V TAPE

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nous media, Marcus believes, doesn't mean anthropologists can't study the people they have traditionally studied. Nor does it mean an anthropologist cannot study them in traditional ways, such as writing an ethnography of an indigenous community's use of video, which is what Ginsburg, Turner, and others have done.

Curiously, Weiner concurs. When asked how anthropologists should study the use of media by indigenous people, he replies, "The same way that anthropologists have usually studied any indigenous institution. 'Media' in the narrow sense are part of the processes of 'mediation' more generally: Human relations and communication are always mediated—through language, objects of exchange, a variety of other sign systems. Studying the effects of Western visual media on human societies strikes me as a very small subset of this more general anthropological quest."

But for Marcus and others, it's clear that anthropologists must grasp a crucial point before they can undertake such study: "The emergence of indigenous media signals that the nature of anthropology's relationship to indigenous people has changed utterly." Ultimately, it's the acceptance or rejection of that transformation, as well as the estimation of its effects, that divides Ginsburg and Weiner. For all their rhetoric about challenging the colonial legacy of anthropology and letting the Other speak, many postmodernist critics of the 1980s remained fixated on the identity of the ethnographer: how her subjectivity, politics, and intellectual baggage invariably shape her view of the Other. What's indispensable about scholars like Ginsburg, Marcus maintains, is that they are urging anthropologists to peel their eyes off themselves and to recognize that they can no longer treat indigenous people as cultural isolates—the objects of some more general anthropological quest. Indigenous people can use video to communicate among themselves—or with others, should they choose. If an anthropologist points a camera at them, chances are they will point one right back.

John Palattella is assistant editor of *University Business*. His work has appeared in *Lingua Franca*, *Dissent*, *Boston Review*, and other publications.

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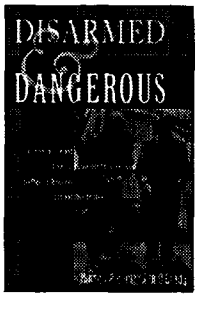

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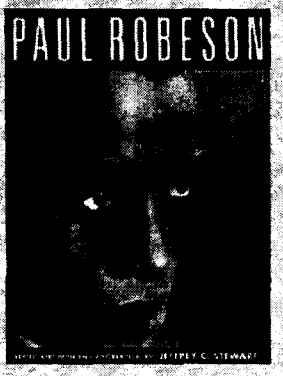

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GOD ONLY KNOWS

A TEAM OF ISRAELI MATHEMATICIANS BELIEVES IT HAS PROOF THAT GOD WROTE THE HEBREW BIBLE. WILL THEIR SKEPTICAL COLLEAGUES LAUGH THEM OUT OF COURT?

BY **HAL COHEN**

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MICHAEL DROSNIN CLAIMS THAT HE HAS managed to lay bare the hitherto unknowable mysteries of time, to get the inside scoop from history's muse, to strike through the pasteboard mask of apparent reality. Fiddling around with his home computer and a Bible in 1994, the former *Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal* reporter (and agnostic Jew) found proof that "some intelligence outside our own" exists and that this same intelligence had placed messages about the future in the Bible. While it fell short of the Cabalist's Holy Grail—finding the ineffable name of God encrypted in the Bible—Drosnin's claim to prophesy created a stir. And not only among yeshiva students and devotees of Borges or Eco. With the alleged endorsement of "famous mathematicians at Harvard, Yale, and Hebrew University," his book *The Bible Code* (Simon & Schuster, 1997) hit the bestseller list in eleven countries, was featured in major newspapers and magazines, and had its movie rights optioned by Warner Bros.

Lost amid the media blitz, however, was the fact that the book is a brazen insult to the reader's intelligence. Its methodology is laughable. It devotes almost no time to explaining the scholarly authority and ideas it spuriously borrows. Instead, *The Bible Code* crassly cashes in on a crisis of faith, invoking something few understand—higher math—as facile proof of something many no longer believe in—religion.

Still, by dropping the names of Ivy League mathematicians, Drosnin drew the attention of academia. The Bible codes, he wrote, had "passed three levels of secular peer review." Could the academy sit mute while Drosnin claimed "the world's most famous mathematicians" as his allies? Most disturbing of all, there was a kernel of truth in Drosnin's claim to a scholarly pedigree. Three years earlier, a respected academic journal had published the Bible-combing work of the Israeli mathematician Eliyahu Rips—work Drosnin cited as the basis of his own. For mathematicians, Rips's work raised awkward questions about how a decidedly abstract field of study like math intersects with the realms of both empirical evidence and religious faith.

THE Bible codes research, while scientific, actually rests at the end of a long and uneasy Jewish tradition of supra-textual readings of the Bible, especially its first five books: the Torah. In the Middle Ages, rabbinical interest in finding the hand of God in the Torah gave rise to a mystical theology: Cabalism. To a Cabalistic reader, the Torah is not merely five books of narrative. It is a "preexistential" text, a blueprint: the Divine Plan that God *literally* used to create the universe. Some strains of Cabalism went so far as to regard the Torah—not the physical text, but the intangible that it signifies—as actually being God. For Cabalists, the divinity of the Torah comes not from its story and statutes but from its hidden meanings.

Finding these meanings involved any number of methods to manipulate, permute, or recombine the text. Cabalism was seen as dangerous and radical by many mainstream rabbis and philosophers, and when Jews entered secular Western life it was largely discarded. But among some ultraorthodox Jews, the mystical tradition has persisted. One mystically inspired rabbi, looking for hidden meanings during the 1940s, noticed that if he took the final "tet" of "bereshit," the first word of Genesis, and counted fifty letters, he came upon a "vav"; another fifty a "resh"; another fifty a "hey": a sequence that spells out "Torah." He called this an "Equidistant Letter Sequence" (ELS) and wondered if using the same method—reading only the *n*th letter in a string of text—would yield other hidden words. Unfortunately, counting these ELSs by hand was tedious and inaccurate; it took a computer to make such noodlings anything more than a curiosity.

Enter internationally renowned Hebrew University group theorist Eliyahu Rips and his cohorts, physicist Doron Witztum and computer programmer Yoav Rosenberg. Needless to say, no Cabalist would require secular scientific proof of anything, but the orthodox Rips group set out to provide just that. Trying to establish that ELSs popped up in the Bible not only in curious ways, but in statistically significant, highly unlikely ways (a subtlety that would be lost on Drosnin), the three ran what came to be known as the "great rabbis" experiment. Drawing from a preselected list of famous rabbis, they searched for those rabbis' names encoded as ELSs in the text. Then they measured the distance between the rabbis' encoded names and the closest ELS occurrence of the rabbis' dates of birth or death (biblical Hebrew does not have numerals, so dates are written entirely in letters).

To determine if there was any significance to these distances, the Rips group also calculated the distances between each rabbi's name and other unrelated dates they had found in the text. Finally, the researchers compared the distances. The names appeared inexplicably close to the correct dates. The researchers calculated the likelihood that chance accounted for this effect as less than one in sixty-two thousand.

So striking were these findings that the peer-reviewed scholarly journal *Statistical Science* (which is known for occasionally delving into unconventional subject matter) printed "Equidistant Letter Sequences in the Book of Genesis" by the three in 1994. "Our referees were baffled," stated the editor in his introduction. "Their prior beliefs made them think the Book of Genesis could not possibly contain meaningful references to modern-day individuals, yet when the authors carried out additional analyses and checks the effect persisted. The paper is thus offered...as a challenging puzzle."

Harold Gans, a former cryptologist for the U.S. Department of Defense, independently duplicated the experiment. His work produced the same results, and he found "no fatal mathematical flaw" in the methodology. Larger meaning? Gans stated that "the codes discovered in Genesis...exist, and the probability that they are mere coincidence is vanishingly small." A statement signed by the mathematicians Harry Furstenberg of Hebrew University, Ilya Piatetski-Shapiro of Yale, and David Kazhdan and J.Bernstein, both of Harvard, guardedly acknowledged that "the present work represents serious research carried out by serious investigators" and that they "make a rather convincing case." If the Hebrew Bible contained accurate information about rabbis who lived in the Middle Ages or modernity, clearly something extraordinary was afoot.

REACTIONS varied. Credulous Internet surfers had a field day. Assorted fundamentalist and evangelical sects—some Jewish, some Christian, some Jews for Jesus—embraced the codes as scientific proof of the Bible's divine authorship. But mathematicians did not know what to do. Many, religious Jews promi-

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ELS SEGMENT FROM *THE BIBLE CODE*.

"SEARCHING FOR AN EQUIDISTANT LETTER SEQUENCE IS NOT LIKE SEARCHING FOR A NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK— IT'S LIKE SEARCHING FOR A BLADE OF HAY."

nent among them, maintained that the codes had nothing to do with either religion or science; others, eager to see the divine in their work, embraced the codes. Among the disbelievers, most were loath to engage in a debate about something that seemed prima facie absurd. To complicate things, most people lacking high-level math training could not understand how the codes had been generated, much less see how they might be specious. And people equipped to explain the great-rabbis experiment remained aloof because they didn't think it worthy of response. NYU mathematician Sylvain Cappell declared it "truly embarrassing, on many levels, that such puerile stupidities are apparently being discussed seriously."

Still, some mathematicians were unable to ignore the challenge that Rips's work represented. "The work...has an appearance of scientific rigor," noted the Australian graph theorist Brendan McKay. "Its faults escaped detection by a bevy of sophisticated referees." Yet even those who did engage in a debate, like McKay, initially gave the codes an off-the-cuff dismissal: They casually demonstrated that, with a little data manipulation, the amazing results of the great-rabbis experiment could be reproduced in the texts that had served as controls. When the codes' proponents shot back that such experiments did not constitute a logical disproof of their work, McKay and his allies had to concede the point and were forced to engage in a more straight-faced peer review. By now, the codes had become the subject of vigorous scholarly debate, which is more than flat-earthers or astrologers or Uri Gellerites can claim for their beliefs.

Over the past several years, culminating with an article in the spring 1998 issue of *Chance*, McKay and his allies have demonstrated that flaws in the Rips group's work are plentiful, even while the math is correct. The manipulations are simple but well concealed. (Whether they are deliberate is an open question.) Basically, the Rips group allowed the data to fit their measuring instruments, and vice versa. Because several names and acrostic appellations—as many as eleven in one case—can refer to each rabbi, and because there are eight forms for writing Hebrew dates, the Rips group had considerable freedom in choosing where to measure a name-date pair. And Rips, pressed by McKay, admitted that no protocol had been used in the selection process. In addition, the formula selected for measuring distance within the pairs was one of many possibilities—and favorable to the Rips group's results. Furthermore, if a rabbi on the list could not be located in Genesis, he was simply dropped. "They used what worked and ignored what didn't," sums up McKay. "It's so obvious that it's almost embarrassing."

Testimony from biblical scholars has been even more damning. They point out that the Torah text is somewhat fluid; meanwhile, the discovery of an ELS can be vitiated by a change of only a few letters. The Torah is always hand copied, and while errors in transcribing are astonishingly rare—a letter or two in the entire text—they do happen. Also, biblical Hebrew does not have standardized spellings, and, according to Jewish law, differences in the text that do not affect the meaning of words are allowed to remain. Finally, there is no authoritative historical text of the Hebrew Bible, and the Talmud indicates that Roman-era Torahs were some nine thousand letters longer than modern versions. Given these variables, the very idea that ELSs found in the Torah could have any significance should, by any logical measure, be dead on arrival. The Rips group's response to this criticism, even according to a sympathetic observer, "has not been adequate."

NOW, FINALLY, enter Michael Drosnin and his book. Looking for his own set of hidden words, Drosnin was after something more timely than the names of long-dead rabbis. Encoded in the text, Drosnin found "economic collapse" intersecting "1929," and "Oswald" and "Ruby" and "he will kill the assassin" all in close proximity. But where Rips merely scoured the Bible for predictions that had already come to pass, Drosnin took the next step and looked into the future—something that Rips (and Jewish law) strongly counseled against. Drosnin found floods, earthquakes, nuclear holocaust, and (a year before it happened) "Yitzak Rabin" near "assassin will assassinate." His method was simple: (1) feed the sacred text through a program that looks for a given word spelled out as an ELS; (2) map the result as a grid so the ELS word appears vertically; (3) search for significant pieces of information

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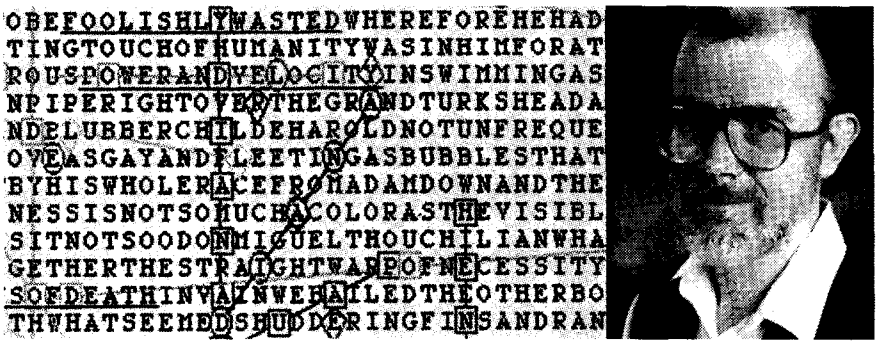

BRENDON McKAY AND AN ELS SEGMENT FROM *MOBY-DICK*

spelled out nearby. His decoding of Rabin's assassination prompted him to warn the Israeli government about it in 1994, and Yigal Amir gave Drosnin's project a to-die-for hook when the right-wing student actually did shoot the prime minister. "In all of history," proclaimed a full-page ad in *The New York Times*, "few books have completely changed the way we view the world. The Bible was one. *The Bible Code* is another."

Despite such claims, mathematicians gave Drosnin's book a chilly reception. Even Rips and his supporters lined up to denounce Drosnin: One did not support "Mr. Drosnin's work...nor the conclusions he derives"; another said he used "no scientific methodology"; a third called his conclusions "absolutely unfounded."

But no one went after *The Bible Code* with the vigor of Brendan McKay. Proclaiming "The public has been conned!" McKay barbed his harpoon and set out after Drosnin, dropping such phrases as "best described as a guess" and "half-truth" and "explicit lie" along the way. His debunking expedition includes a search for significant ELSs in a text with less compelling claims to divine provenance: Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*. He demonstrates that, given a sufficiently massive text and enough patience and skill at word searches, an adept soothsayer can predict anything using Drosnin's Bible-code technique. As one skeptic puts it, "When you search for an ELS, you are far from searching for a needle in a haystack—rather, you're searching for a blade of hay." Indeed, Melville's epic—correctly decoded—foretells a variety of epoch-making events, including "Lady Diana" crossed by "mortal in these jaws of death" near both "Dodi" and "Henri Paul." (McKay also found, encrypted in the Book of Revelation, "William Gates" not far from "messiah.")

A rational humanist Starbuck to Drosnin's mystical obscurantist Ahab, McKay has disseminated his findings on the Web (http://cs.anu.edu.au/~bdm), and recently toured the Northeast and Canada, where he split his time between the Bible codes and less frivolous topics, such as "Random Linear Arrangements of Dominoes."

Why the crusade? McKay laments that, when seen from the perspective of mass-media hype, math's role in the affair does not appear to be on the side of critical reason and rationality. Although few in the field still support the codes, and he and other mathematicians were the ones who tried to set the record straight, he still worries about the "negative image of mathematicians that is being spread around." Religion is not at issue here; the use of math to distort evidence is.

Of course, for some, logical refutations will not suffice. Due to the codes' reception in certain Orthodox Jewish circles, especially in Israel, the findings have become an article of faith. Such acceptance worries McKay: "The codes are being presented in a legitimate religious context, so some people who would normally reject pseudoscience don't have the same wariness." With a note of resignation, he says, "People who are motivated to believe in this sort of thing can easily believe in this sort of thing. Presenting this evidence to a true believer has absolutely no effect." Adds NYU's Sylvain Cappell: "For this to become such a source of fascination suggests that, for many people, neither science nor religion is working. It's tragic that people should find a source of existential solace in something so content-less."

Hal Cohen is a freelance writer living in Brooklyn.

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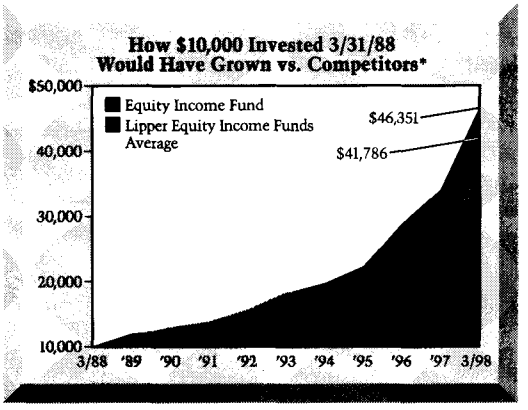

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HUMANITIES

African Studies

Eileen Julien, Professor of French and Comparative Literature, Indiana University at Bloomington, *Modernity as theme and practice in African literatures*

American Literature

Paul Kane, Associate Professor of English, Vassar College, *A critical re-evaluation of Emerson's poetry*

Lyle Leverich, Scholar, San Rafael, California, *A biography of Tennessee Williams*

Architecture and Design

Patricia Waddy, Professor of Architecture, Syracuse University, *The Del Bufalo buildings in Rome*

British History

A. Roger Ekirch, Professor of History, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, *Night in times past*

Classics

Sarah B. Pomeroy, Distinguished Professor of Classics, Hunter College, City University of New York, *Spartan women*

James Romm, Visiting Associate Professor of Classics, Fordham University, *Ancient Greek views of India and their influence*

Dance Studies

Ann Hutchinson Guest, Director, Language of Dance Centre, London, England; Consultant, Laban Centre, London, *Advanced Labanotation*

East Asian Studies

Susan J. Napier, Associate Professor of Japanese Literature and Culture, University of Texas at Austin, *A cultural investigation into Japanese animation*

English Literature

Richard Dellamora, Professor of English and Cultural Studies and Acting Director, Graduate Program in Methodologies, Trent University, *Citizenship in the Victorian novel*

David Riggs, Professor of English, Stanford University, *A life of Christopher Marlowe*

Henry Staten, Professor of English and Adjunct Professor of Philosophy, University of Utah, *The transvaluation of values in the English novel*

Film and Video Studies

Larry Gross, Sol Worth Professor of Communication, Annenberg School of Communication, University of Pennsylvania, *Lesbians, gay men, and the media*

Tom Gunning, Professor of Art History, University of Chicago, *The early detective film*

Linda Williams, Professor of Film Studies and Rhetoric, University of California, Berkeley, *American racial melodrama*

Fine Arts Research

Hal Foster, Professor of Modern Art, Princeton University, *Definitions of artistic medium and aesthetic field in modernism*

Eloise Quiñones Keber, Professor of Art History, Baruch College and The Graduate School, City University of New York, *A reassessment of Aztec art*

Jeffrey Chipps Smith, Professor of Art History, University of Texas at Austin, *Jesuits and the art of the early Catholic Reformation in Germany*

Nancy J. Troy, Professor of Art History, University of Southern California, *Fashion and the marketing of modernism*

Folklore

Lee Haring, Professor of English, Brooklyn College, City University of New York; Adjunct Professor of Folklore and Folklife, University of Pennsylvania, *The ethnography of interpretive communities*

French History

Lenard R. Berlanstein, Professor of History, University of Virginia, *French theatre women in the 18th and 19th centuries*

Suzanne Desan, Associate Professor of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison, *Family law, gender, and politics in revolutionary France*

James R. Farr, Professor of History, Purdue University, *The Giroux affair and the law in 17th-century France*

Carla Hesse, Professor of History, University of California, Berkeley, *Women, literature, and politics in the era of the French Revolution*

Elisabeth Weber, Associate Professor of Germanic, Slavic, and Semitic Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, *French philosophy and psychoanalysis and the Shoah*

German History

Mary Lindemann, Professor of History, Carnegie Mellon University, *Crime, identity, and politics in Amsterdam, Antwerp, and Hamburg, 1650-1815*

Joachim Neugroschel, Writer and Translator, Belle Harbor, New York, *Translation of S. Ansky's writings*

Jane O. Newman, Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature, University of California,Irvine, *The disciplinary formation of Renaissance and early modern studies*

History

Barbara Weinstein, Professor of History, State University of New York at Stony Brook, *Regionalism in Sao Paulo and the formation of Brazilian national identity*

History of Science and Technology

Bruce C. Berndt, Professor of Mathematics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, *Ramanujan's lost notebook*

Maurice A. Finocchiaro, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, *A critical history of the Galileo affair, 1633-1992*

Intellectual and Cultural History

Kathy Eden, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University, *Tradition and intellectual property in the Adages of Erasmus*

Jay Winter, Reader in Modern History, University of Cambridge, England, *Albert Kahn and the face of humanity*

Italian History

Steven A. Epstein, Professor of History, University of Colorado at Boulder, *The language of Italian slavery*

Teodolinda Barolini, Professor of Italian, Columbia University, *The Italian lyric from Giacomo to Dante*

Latin American History

Frank Salomon, Professor of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin-Madison, *Andean writing systems*

Linguistics

Alan S. Prince, Professor of Linguistics, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, *Investigations in Optimality Theory*

Literary Criticism

Judith Butler, Professor of Rhetoric and Comparative Literature, University of California, Berkeley, *The politics of kinship*

Medieval History

Robin Chapman Stacey, Associate Professor of History and Adjunct Associate Professor of Women's Studies, University of Washington, *The performance of law in early Ireland*

Jody Enders, Professor of French, University of California, Santa Barbara, *The social context of medieval French drama*

Michael W. Herren, Professor of Classics and Humanities, York University; Adjunct Professor of Medieval Studies, University of Toronto, *The mythographic tradition in antiquity and the Middle Ages*

Music Research

Scott G. Burnham, Associate Professor of Music, Princeton University, *Mozart, Schubert, and the music of Romantic subjectivity*

Near Eastern Studies

Abdellah Hammoudi, Bayard Dodge Professor of Near Eastern Studies, Professor of Anthropology, and Director, Institute for the Transregional Study of the Contemporary Middle East, Princeton University, *The pilgrimage to Mecca as a ritual process*

Philosophy

Frances Myrna Kamm, Professor of Philosophy, New York University; Visiting Professor of Philosophy, University of California, Los Angeles, *Error theories and nonconsequentialism*

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Photography Studies

Elizabeth Anne McCauley, Professor of Art, University of Massachusetts at Boston, *Photography and the art-historical imagination, 1839-1939*

Religion

Paula Richman, Irvin E. Houck Professor in the Humanities, Oberlin College, *The Ramayana in the political discourse of Madras, 1902-1973*

Renaissance History

Paula Findlen, Associate Professor of Italian History, Stanford University, *Women and science in 18th-century Italy*

Russian History

Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, Associate Professor of History, California State Polytechnic University, *Theatre and society in imperial Russia*

Slavic Literature

Svetlana Boym, Professor of Slavic and Comparative Literature, Harvard University, *Nostalgia and post-Communist memory*

Clare Cavanagh, Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Wisconsin, Madison, *Poetry and power in modern Russia and Poland*

South Asian Studies

Mattison Mines, Professor of Anthropology, University of California, Santa Barbara, *The social history of individuality in south India*

United States History

Richard D. Brown, Professor of History, University of Connecticut, *Family violence and community justice in the early American republic*

John D'Emilio, Professor of History, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, *A biography of Bayard Rustin*

Candace Falk, Editor and Director, The Emma Goldman Papers, University of California, Berkeley. *Essays on Emma Goldman*

Timothy J. Gilfoyle, Associate Professor of History, Loyola University of Chicago, *George Appo and the urban underworld of 19th-century America*

John F. Kasson, Professor of History and Adjunct Professor of American Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, *The white male body and the crisis of modernity in America, 1893-1917*

Nelson Lichtenstein, Professor of History, University of Virginia, *A history of the United States, 1941-2000*

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Anthropology and Cultural Studies

Peter T. Ellison, Professor of Anthropology, Harvard University, *Ecological constraints on human reproduction*

Alma Gottlieb, Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaig, *West African infant-care practices*

Bambi B. Schieffelin, Professor of Anthropology, New York University, *A cultural study of Kaluli language*

Michael T. Taussig, Professor of Anthropology, Columbia University, *The folklore of justice in Colombia*

Economics

Kenneth Rogoff, Charles and Marie Robertson Professor of International Affairs, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, *Strategic aspects of international macroeconomic policy*

Christina D. Romer, Class of 1957-Garff B. Wilson Professor of Economics, University of California, Berkeley, *The successes and failures of American macroeconomic policy in the 20th century*

Michael Woodford, Professor of Economics, Princeton University, *Monetary policy without money*

Geography and Environmental Studies

Richard Wright, Professor of Geography, Dartmouth College, *Immigrants and the rhetoric of assimilation*

Law

Richard H. Weisberg, Floersheimer Professor of Constitutional Law, Cardozo Law School, Yeshiva University, *The privatization of public discourse*

Political Science

Paul Pierson, Professor of Government, Harvard University, *Temporal processes in politics*

Psychology

Gilles R. Fauconnier, Professor of Cognitive Science, University of California, San Diego, *Conceptual integration*

Daniel L. Schacter, Professor of Psychology, Harvard University, *Constructive memory and the brain*

Sociology

Nicola Beisel, Associate Professor of Sociology and Acting Director, Program in American Studies, Northwestern University, *Race and the politics of abortion in America*

Mauro F. Guillén, Assistant Professor of Management, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, *Business, labor, and globalization in Argentina, South Korea, and Spain*

Emanuel A. Schegloff, Professor of Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles, *Practices and structures of conversation*

NATURAL SCIENCES

Applied Mathematics

Demetrios Christodoulou, Professor of Mathematics, Princeton University, *Black holes and space-time singularities*

Astronomy and Astrophysics

Mitchell C. Begelman, Professor of Astrophysical and Planetary Sciences, Joint Institute for Laboratory Astrophysics, University of Colorado at Boulder, *Demography of black-hole spin*

Christopher F. McKee, Professor of Physics and Astronomy, University of California, Berkeley, *The evolution of the interstellar medium of disk galaxies*

Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Barbara Kathryn Burgess, Professor of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, University of California, Irvine, *Gated proton and electron transfer reactions*

Sabeeha Merchant, Professor of Biochemistry, University of California, Los Angeles, *Assembly of protein complexes in biological membranes*

Thomas V. O'Halloran, Dow Chemical Company Research Professor and Professor of Chemistry, Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, and Cell Biology, Northwestern University, *Studies of metal-chaperone proteins*

Donald B. Oliver, Professor of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, Wesleyan University, *The mechanism of SecA membrane penetration*

Neil H. Shubin, Associate Professor of Biology, University of Pennsylvania, *The origin of evolutionary novelty*

Sidney Strickland, Leading Professor of Pharmacology, State University of New York at Stony Brook, *The role of proteases in wiring the central nervous system*

Susan Strome, Professor of Biology, Indiana University at Bloomington, *The roles of microtubule motors in early embryo development*

Biology, Ecology and Plant Science

Jody Hey, Associate Professor of Microbiology and Genetics, Nelson Biological Laboratories, Rutgers University, Piscataway, *The genetics of speciation*

Raymond B. Huey, Professor of Zoology, University of Washington, *Success and death of mountaineers on the high peaks of the Himalayas*

Russell K. Monson, Professor of Biology, University of Colorado at Boulder, *Biospheric controls over atmospheric chemistry*

Chemistry

Christopher A. Reed, Professor of Chemistry, University of Southern California, *Studies of novel carbon-based materials*

Robert G. Bergman, Professor of Chemistry, University of California, Berkeley, *Development of new transition-metal catalyzed reactions*

William M. Gelbart, Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry, University of California, Los Angeles, *Phenomenological theory of model DNA, proteins, and cell membranes*

Computer Science

Jin-Yi Cai, Professor of Computer Science and Director of Graduate Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo, *Computational complexity theory*

Earth Sciences

Don L. Anderson, Professor of Geo- physics, California Institute of Technology, *The internal Earth system*

John G. Sclater, Professor of Marine Geology and Geophysics, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego, *Studies in the tectonic history of the Indian Ocean*

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Engineering

Pallab K. Bhattacharya, Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, University of Michigan, *Photon localization in semiconductor heterostructures*

Salvatore Torquato, Professor of Engineering, Princeton University, *Biological materials and growth processes*

Mathematics

Sun-Yung Alice Chang, Professor of Mathematics, University of California, Los Angeles, *Studies of the Paneitz operator*

Robert Lazarsfeld, Professor of Mathematics, University of Michigan, *Linear series on algebraic varieties*

Gopal Prasad, Professor of Mathematics, University of Michigan, *Representation theory of reductive p-adic groups*

Joseph H. Silverman, Professor of Mathematics, Brown University, *Number theory and diophantine equations*

Neuroscience

Arthur P. Arnold, Professor of Physiological Science and Neurobiology and Associate Director, Brain Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles, *Sexual differentiation of the brain*

Peter Mombaerts, Assistant Professor and Head, Laboratory of Vertebrate Developmental Neurogenetics, Rockefeller University, *The wiring of the olfactory system*

Laura Ann Petitto, Associate Professor of Psychology and Director, Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory for Language, Sign, and Cognition, McGill University; Research Scientist, McDonnell-Pew Centre for Cognitive Neuroscience, *Studies in human and animal cognition*

Physics

Eugene W. Beier, Professor of Physics, University of Pennsylvania, *Neutrinos emitted by the sun*

Eduardo Fradkin, Professor of Physics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, *Studies in low-temperature quantum phenomena*

George Gruner, Professor of Physics, University of California, Los Angeles, *Quantum dynamics of solids*

Jorge Pullin, Associate Professor of Physics, Pennsylvania State University, *Gravitational waves from colliding black holes*

Resources

Shripad Tuljapurkar, President, Mountain View Research, Los Altos, California, *Uncertainty and decision-making in public retirement systems*

Science Writing

Jared Diamond, Professor of Physiology, University of California, Los Angeles School of Medicine, *Ecological collapses of past societies*

CREATIVE ARTS

Choreography

John Jasperse, Choreographer, New York City; President and Artistic Director, Thin Man Dance, *Choreography*

Demetrius Klein, Choreographer, West Palm Beach, Florida; Artistic Director, Demetrius Klein Dance Company, *Choreography*

Donna N. Uchizono, Choreographer, New York City; Artistic Director, Donna Uchizono Company, *Choreography*

Fiction

David Gates, Writer, Granville, New York; Senior Writer, *Newsweek*; Instructor in MFA Writing Program, New School for Social Research, *Fiction*

Francisco Goldman, Writer, Brooklyn, New York, *Fiction*

Julie Hecht, Writer, East Hampton, New York, *Fiction*

A. M. Homes, Writer, New York City; Adjunct Assistant Professor, Writing Program, Columbia University, *Fiction*

Elizabeth McCracken, Writer, Somerville, Massachusetts, *Fiction*

Janet Peery, Writer, Norfolk, Virginia; Assistant Professor of English, Old Dominion University, *Fiction*

Kate Wheeler, Writer, Somerville, Massachusetts, *Fiction*

Film and Video

Ellen Bruno, Film Maker, San Francisco, *Film making*

Yemane I. Demissie, Film Maker, Culver City, California, *Film making*

Daniel Eisenberg, Film Maker, Chicago; Assistant Professor of Filmmaking, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, *Film making*

Nina Fonoroff, Film Maker, Buffalo, New York; Visiting Assistant Professor of Media Study, State University of New York at Buffalo, *Film making*

Billy Golfus, Film Maker, Minneapolis, *Film making*

Dusan Makavejev, Film Maker, Paris, France; Visiting Lecturer, Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, *Film making*

Tom Noonan, Film Maker, New York City; President, Genre Pictures; Artistic Director, Paradise Theater Company, *Film making*

Jay Rosenblatt, Film Maker, San Francisco; Instructor in Film, San Francisco State University; Instructor in Film, College of San Mateo, *Film making*

General Nonfiction

Sue Halpern, Writer, Johnsburg, New York, *Monarch butterfly migration as fact and metaphor*

Judith Moore, Writer, Berkeley, California; Editor and Staff Writer, San Diego Reader, *A book of essays*

Ilan Stavans, Associate Professor of Spanish, Amherst College, *A memoir of language*

Isabel Wilkerson, Writer, Chicago; Senior Writer, The New York Times, *The aftermath of the black migration to the North and West*

Music Composition

Hayes Biggs, Composer, New York City; Member of the Faculty, Manhattan School of Music; Associate Editor, C. F. Peters Corporation, *Music composition*

David Crumb, Composer, Eugene, Oregon; Assistant Professor of Composition, University of Oregon, *Music Composition*

Justin N. Dello Joio, Composer, New York City; Faculty Composer-in-Residence and Adjunct Associate Professor of Music, New York University, *Music composition*

Timothy Kramer, Composer, San Antonio, Texas; Associate Professor of Music and Composer-in-Residence, Trinity University, *Music composition*

Robert C. Maggio, Composer, Media, Pennsylvania; Associate Professor of Music Theory and Composition, West Chester University, *Music composition*

Lawrence L. Widdoes, Composer, New York City; Instructor in Literature and Materials of Music, Juilliard School, *Music composition*

Painting, Sculpture, and Installation Art

Adam Baer, Photographer, Greenwich, Connecticut, *Photography*

Burt Barr, Artist, New York City, *Installation art*

Cindy Bernard, Artist, San Pedro, California; Member of the Adjunct Faculty in Art, University of Southern California, *Visual Art*

Barbara Bloom, Artist, New York City, *Visual Art*

Andrew Borowiec, Photographer, Akron, Ohio; Professor of Art, University of Akron, *Photography*

Albert Chong, Photographer, Boulder, Colorado; Associate Professor of Art, University of Colorado at Boulder, *Photography*

Rackstraw Downes, Artist, New York City, *Painting*

David Fludd, Artist, New York City, *Painting*

Kenji Fujita, Artist, Red Hook, New York; Member of MFA Faculty, Bard College; Adjunct Assistant Professor of Art, Brooklyn College, City University of New York; Instructor, MFA and Asian Arts Programs, School of Visual Arts, *Sculpture and works on paper*

Salvo Galano, Photographer, New York City, *Photography*

Marvin Gates, Artist, Boston, Massachusetts, *Painting*

Susan Hiller, Artist, London, England, *Visual Art*

Bill Jensen, Artist, New York City, *Painting, drawing, and printmaking*

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continued from page 7

sion forces directed by American officers.

Such people do not exist for Weathersby and Gaddis; their struggles are buried and forgotten, unworthy of attention. But one would expect Mr. Press to pay attention to the scholarship of the people he chooses to write about. He claims that I "stubbornly maintain" that we should "wait until documents are released in North Korea and China" before deciding who started the war in June 1950. In fact, I used a treasure trove of captured North Korean and Chinese documentation, much of it formerly secret. What I said was that we can't answer this question (one still so pregnant with politics) because all the relevant archives remain closed—especially signals and operational intelligence archives in Washington and Moscow. As for Ms. Weathersby's scholarship, in spite of more than a decade of self-promotion and pretentious claims of "explosive new findings," it is non-existent in book form and all but invisible in refereed journals.

BRUCE CUMINGS
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Eyal Press replies: I must admit to finding Bruce Cumings's letter befuddling. In one paragraph, he says he has abstained from "polemics" about who started the Korean War. In the next paragraph, he proceeds to lay out his view of how the war started—namely, from a thoughtless 1945 American intervention and five years of subsequent fighting. This is exactly how my article portrayed his argument, which I have actually examined, and which, far from caricaturing, I praised as "detailed and illuminating" in my piece.

I also discussed what Cumings repeats in his final paragraph: namely, that while he believes we need to wait for more evidence to emerge before deciding who started the fighting in June 1950, Weathersby believes clear evidence has already emerged from Soviet archives on that point. Cumings claims the whole debate is not really that important—only to label it "pregnant with politics." He then proceeds to stigmatize Kathryn Weathersby as a pretentious self-promoter. Weathersby, he might be curious to know, stressed her admiration for his work when I interviewed her.

SAME OLD STORY

Though provided with hints as to the author's own views on pirate society, the reader of Lawrence Osborne's "A Pirate's Progress" [March] has to wait until the final paragraph to find summary evidence that the author is perfectly content to keep intact the old stereotypes. In the face of what Osborne describes as "a more complex reality," and despite substantial information to the contrary that the article itself presents, it is the Hollywood and Disney version of pirates that Osborne tries to convince the reader is the best interpretation of the available data.

The majority of pirates lived—as do most people pushed to the margins of hegemonic economies, capitalist or otherwise, in the past or present—from meal to meal. Most pirate raids accrued just enough food and other basic provisions to last until the next raid. Whatever was gathered from these forays was usually divided fairly evenly among all members of the crew. Thus, the actual situation was rather different from the "lusty acquisition" of wealth that Osborne depicts pirates as having engaged in on a regular basis. For this reason, Marcus Rediker, Kenneth Kinkor, and Peter Linebaugh's understanding of pirates as part of an Atlantic-region multiethnic proletariat with possible protosocialist tendencies is much closer to the mark than Osborne's old-school anticommunism and snide antimulticulturalism could ever allow.

In fact, the entire article is motivated less by analysis and more by rhetoric. Establishing from the start a structural binary between the pirate as "rogue" or "hero," Osborne then opines that the pirate is "what we want him to be," a disingenuous move to say the least, since Osborne decidedly does not want him or her to have the qualities posited by the scholars he attacks. Added to this is Osborne's frequent inability to articulate his own theory regarding pirate life without it taking the form of an overgeneralized question. The result is a relatively superficial dismissal of recent substantial contributions to pirate studies.

ALAN GILBERT
BROOKLYN, NY

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LEARNING CURVE

S. D. Metcalf's article, "Attention Deficits" [March], strikes a responsive chord among those who have grappled with the learning-disabilities conundrum. I speak from bittersweet experience as lead counsel for Boston University in a recent lawsuit filed by a group of students purporting to represent all those with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder. I take issue with only one word in Mr. Metcalf's article. He refers to the group of students who "*successfully* sued Boston University for discrimination...."

It is true that United States District Judge Patti B. Saris found that certain of the University's decisions were motivated by bias. However, Judge Saris also held that the Americans With Disabilities Act does not require Boston University to provide course substitutions to accommodate students with learning disabilities. Rather, the Judge recognized the University's right to establish and maintain its own academic standards.

The plaintiffs in the Boston University lawsuit asked Judge Saris to (1) prohibit the Office of the President from participating in the process of determining appropriate accommodations for a student with a learning disability; (2) require the University to accept evaluations made by individuals who lacked adequate credentials; (3) require the University to grant course substitutions in math and foreign languages; and (4) prohibit the University from requiring any retesting of students whose documentation was outdated or irrelevant to the accommodations requested. The Court rejected every one of these demands. And, perhaps most significantly, Judge Saris rejected the plaintiffs' efforts to involve the Court in continued monitoring of Boston University's program for accommodating students with learning disabilities.

LAWRENCE S. ELSWIT
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL
BOSTON UNIVERSITY

CORRECTIONS

In "Getting Their Hands Dirty? Archaeologists and the Looting Trade" [May/June], the debate over whether to put a photograph of an unprovenienced jade mask on the cover of *National Geographic* was presented in incomplete terms. As we reported, Richard Adams originally opposed the use of a photograph of the mask. But he later changed his mind on the issue. And when a watercolor painting was later substituted for the photograph, it was not because of Adams's objections but rather because the owner of the mask refused to permit its use.

Due to a film-studio error, the photograph that accompanied "Math Demon" [May/June] was misidentified. The photograph is not of Patrick O'Donnell.

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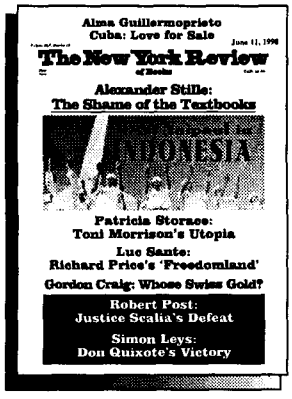

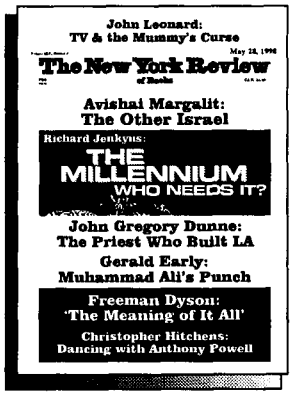

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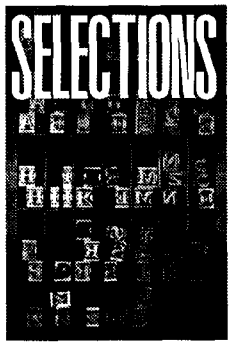

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Abstracts of proposed papers should be sent to Prof. Andrew Light,
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Hypotheses

THE PREMISE KEEPERS

Must you accept a valid argument?

THE ENGLISH CLERIC AND satirist Sydney Smith once observed two women quarreling with each other from their respective attic windows across a narrow street in Edinburgh. "Those two women will never agree," he remarked. "They are arguing from different premises." That was in the early nineteenth century. Today the situation is worse. Even sharing the same premises with your interlocutor is no guarantee that you will eventually come to the same conclusion. You must also share the same logic.

The purpose of logic is to distinguish valid forms of argument from faulty ones, called "fallacies." If you conduct me from premises that I accept to a conclusion that I dislike by means of a fallacious argument, I am under no obligation to embrace that conclusion. If I, on the other hand, take you from premises you accept to a conclusion you dislike by means of a logically valid argument, then you are *compelled* to embrace the conclusion.

"Compelled by what?" you ask. By the court of rationality, I respond. The fact that my argument is logically valid means that the premises cannot be true without the conclusion being true; so if you believe the premises, you *have* to believe the conclusion, or you are being irrational. "What's so bad about being irrational?" you ask defiantly. I then dig myself in deeper by giving you reasons for accepting my reasons, which leave you similarly unmoved. What I'd like to do, though, is turn my logic into a club and use it to beat you into submission.

The impotence of logic was celebrated by Robert Nozick in his 1981 book *Philosophical Explanations*. "Why are philosophers intent on forcing others to believe things?" he asked. "Is that a nice way to behave toward someone?" What logicians really wish they had, Nozick darkly suggests, is an argument that sets up reverberations in the brain so that if the person refuses to accept the conclusion, he *dies*.

One basic logical principle is the law of noncontradiction, which says that a proposition and its negation cannot both be true. In fact, there are many people who violate this law without realizing it. They believe *p*, *q*, *r*, and *s*, while unaccountably failing to notice that *q*, *r*, and *s* logically entail *not-p*. Should you bring this to their attention, they might eject *p* from their creed. More likely, they will try to dodge the charge of inconsistency by quibbling about meanings. ("What I said was that neutral countries should not be *invaded*. That was an *incursion*, not an *invasion*!")

But what if your interlocutor invokes the spirit of Walt Whitman and says, "Do I contradict myself? Very well, I contradict myself!" (The physicist Niels Bohr once came close to this. A colleague, seeing a horseshoe over Bohr's office door, said, "You don't really believe in that stuff, do you?" Bohr replied, "No, but I hear it works even for those who don't believe.") What do you say to such a person?

"This would vitiate all science," is what W.V. Quine, the world's preeminent living logician, would say: "Any conjunction of the form *p and not-p* logically implies every sentence whatever; therefore acceptance of one sentence and its negation as true would commit us to accepting every sentence as true, and thus forfeiting all distinction between true and false." To see what Quine means, suppose you believe both *p* and *not-p*. Since you believe *p*, you must also believe *p or q*, where *q* is any arbitrary proposition. But from *p or q* and *not-p*, it obviously follows that *q*. Hence any arbitrary proposition is true.

The idea that a contradiction is bad because absolutely anything follows from it is often alien to the average person. Bertrand Russell was once trying to get this very point across at a public lecture when a heckler interrupted him. "So prove to me that if two plus two is five, I'm the Pope," the heckler said. "Very well," Russell replied. "From 'two plus two equals five' it follows, subtracting three from each side, that two equals one. You and the Pope are two, therefore you are one."

"Coercive" formal logic, as philosophy departments have traditionally taught it, seems to be getting shoved aside these days by other concerns. Ruth Ginzberg, a philosopher at Wesleyan University, has taken issue with the law of *modus ponens*, which sanctions inferences of the form if *p*, then *q*; but *p*; therefore *q*. Ginzberg maintains that *modus ponens* is used by males to marginalize women—who are less likely to recognize its supposed validity—as "irrational." In a different vein, some would-be reformers have suggested that fallacies be thought of as "failures of cooperation" rather than as errors of reasoning. Others advocate the adoption of "principles of charity": If, for example, your interlocutor's argument is a muddle, try to reconstrue it in a way that makes it valid.

Whether this approach is a better route to truth is arguable. But the new niceness in logic certainly threatens to take some of the zest out of polemics. Coercion by logic—or its simulacrum—can be a marvelous blood sport.

One thinks, for example, of the great confrontation between Diderot and the Swiss mathematician Leonhard Euler before the court of Catherine the Great in 1773. Diderot, an atheist, was almost entirely ignorant of mathematics. Euler, a devout Christian, approached the philosophe, bowed, and said very solemnly, "Sir, $(a+b)^n/n=x$, hence God exists. Reply!" Delighted laughter broke out on all sides as Diderot crumpled before this stunning inference.

The next day Diderot asked Catherine for permission to return to France, a request to which the empress graciously consented.

JIM HOLT

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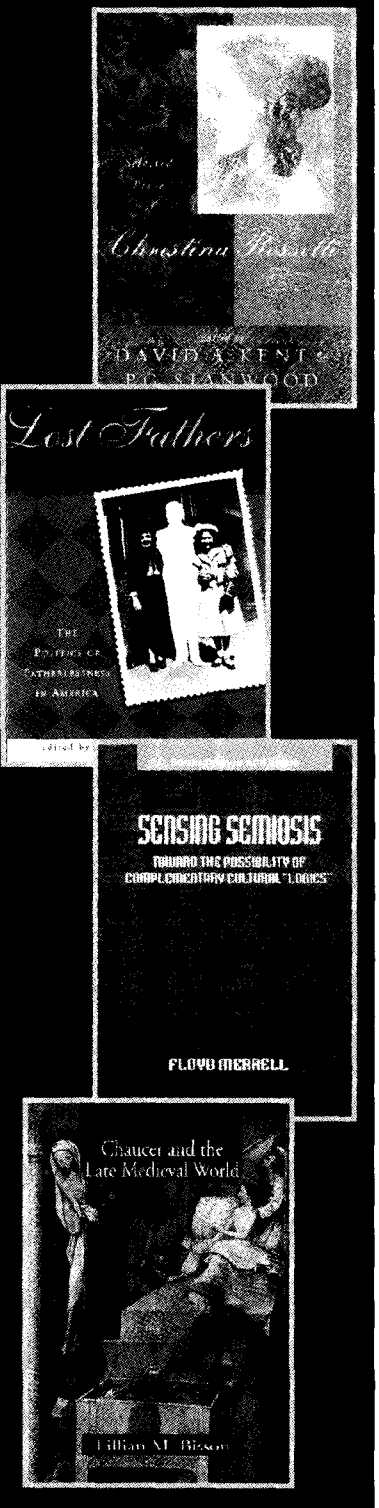

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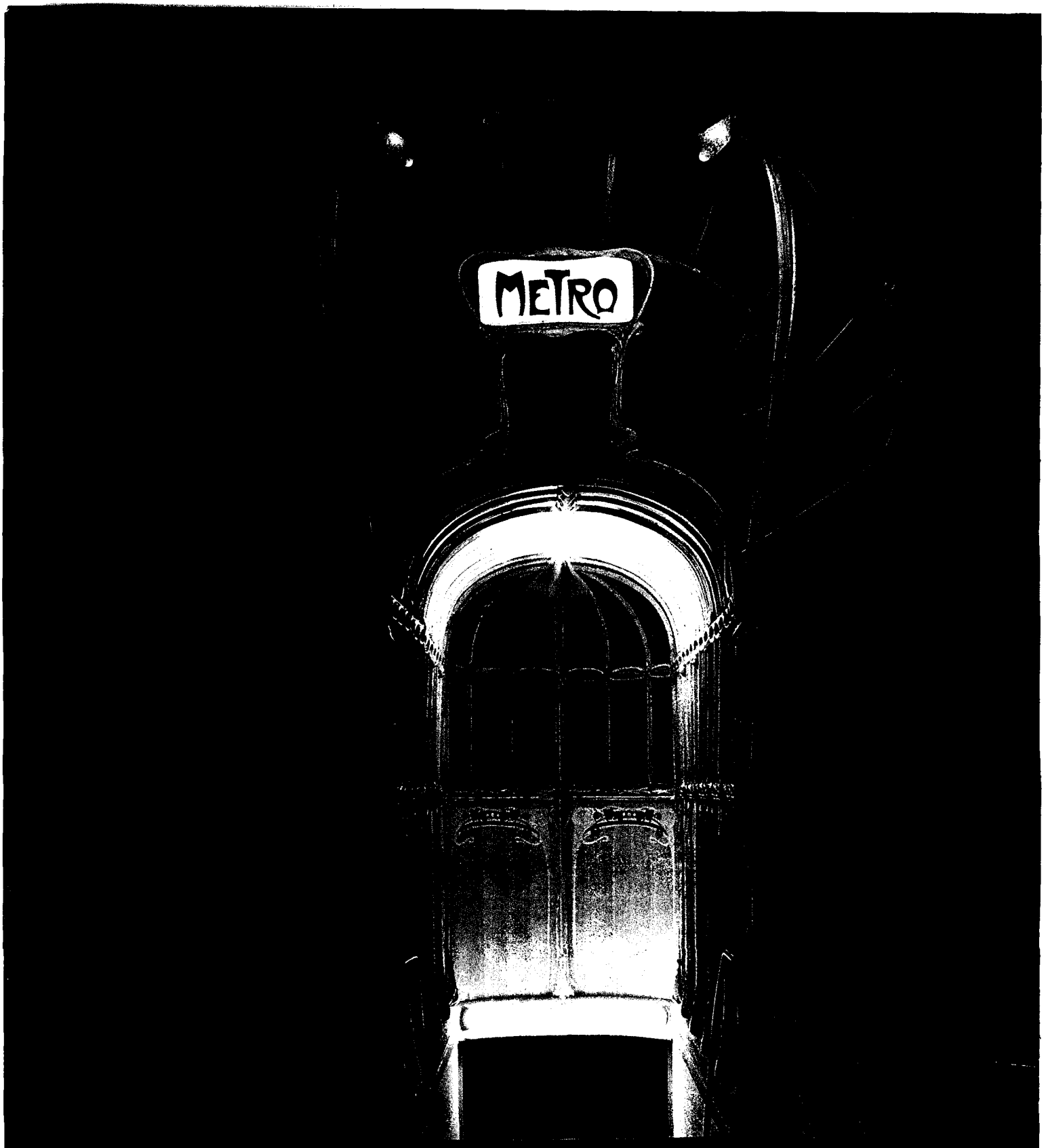

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